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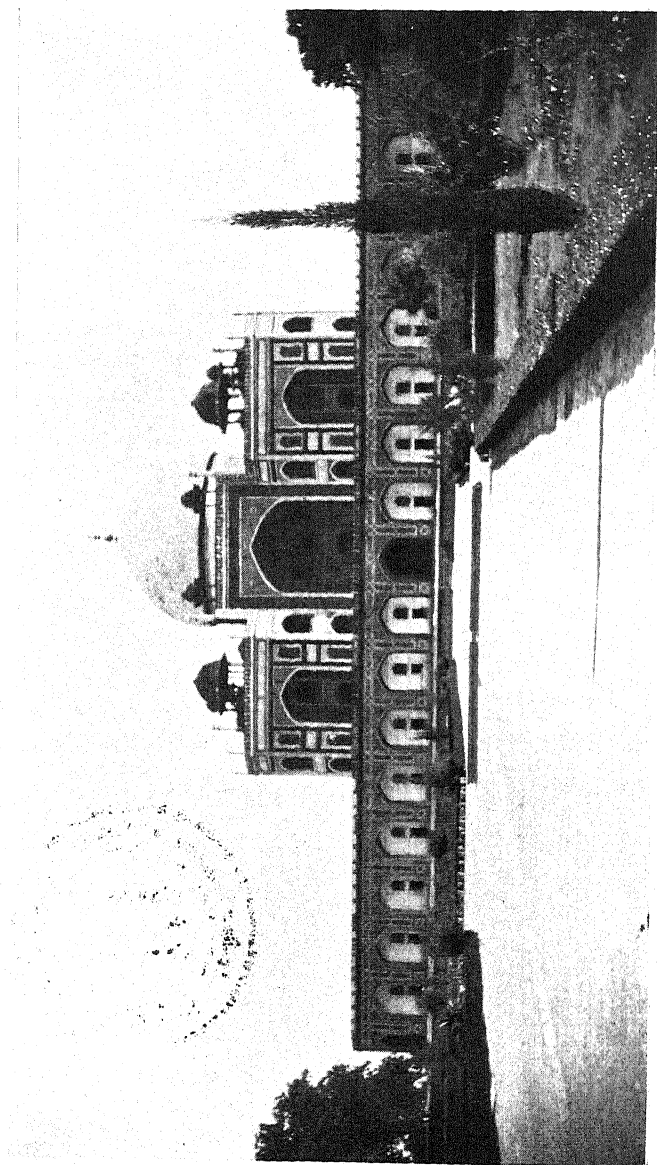
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HUMAYOUN'S TOMB, DELHI.

(See page 260.)

FROM CHARING CROSS TO DELHI

BY

S. PARNELL KERR

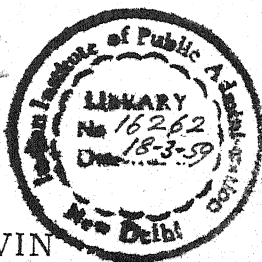
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"Now a traveller is a creature not always looking at sights; he remembers (how often!) the happy land of his birth—he has, too, his moments of humble enthusiasm, about fire and food, about shade and drink; and if he gives to those feelings anything like the prominence that really belonged to them at the time of his travelling, he will not seem a very good teacher."—
A. W. KINGLAKE.

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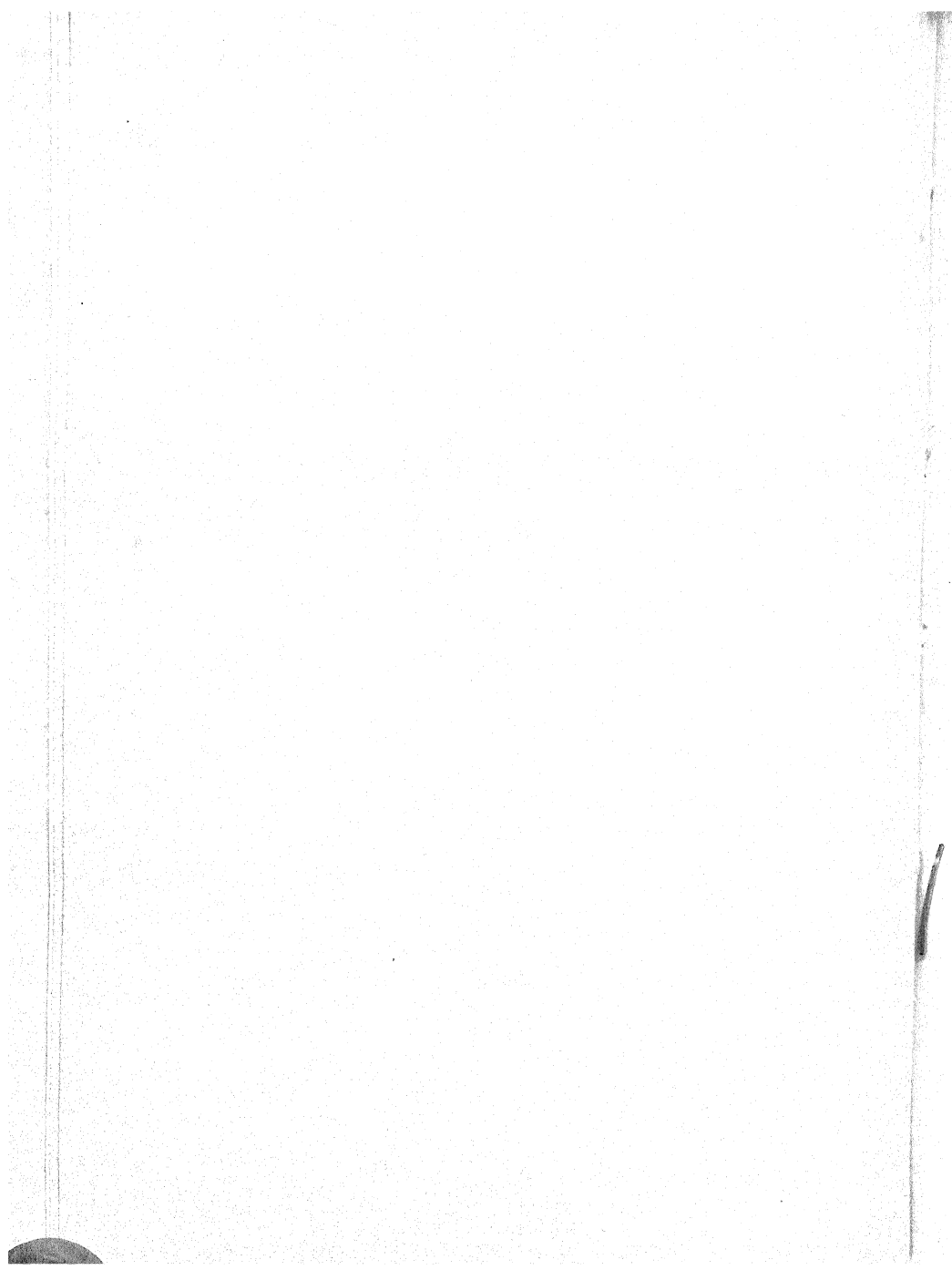
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TO MY MOTHER



PREFACE

"SINCE the beginning of history," writes Mr Winston Churchill in the recent biography of his father, "many travellers have visited the East. Few have neglected to record their impressions." That is painfully true. Even Mr Churchill himself succumbed to the temptation. Human nature is very weak.

Books on India, of which there are a number, may be divided roughly into three classes. There is, first, the Guide-book, where every detail of journey and of scene is set down faithfully and with meticulous accuracy; second, there is the Colour-book, so-called because the colour in the pictures makes up for the want of it in the letter-press; and, third, there is the Educational Treatise, in which the reader is carefully instructed on Indian problems of all kinds—social, political, and economic.

This book does not profess to be any of these. It is too desultory to rank as a guide-book; its pictures are but the snapshots of an amateur; while whatever of educational matter it contains has been ostentatiously placed in appendices, which may be skipped by the judicious. What, then, does the volume profess to be? Only a light and irresponsible chronicle of impressions: nothing more. Of course the author has his own particular delusion. He imagines that beneath the lightness and irresponsibility there is a certain vein of seriousness and of purpose. That may well be so; for you cannot, with the best will in the world, always be frivolous in India: there is too much to think about.

S. P. K.

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FROM CHARING CROSS TO DELHI



CHAPTER I

FROM LONDON TO MARSEILLES

THE 9th of November, which was the day this journey began, was a day of heavy rain and darkness. The streets were deep in mud. It would have been pleasant then to realise that at the end of the journey were the heat and sunshine of India: but it was not possible. I defy any man setting out on such a journey and on such a morning to realise anything except that he is GOING AWAY. Here are the places of his love, the friends; in front are all the chances and perils of travel in strange lands; absence, separation; a thousand nameless evils in which his morbid fancy revels. Observe that I predicate a November morning—with rain and mud: Lord Mayor's Show day, too.

Can anybody be really joyous on a Lord Mayor's Show day? As the hansom sped along through the mud of Whitehall, and passed the Houses of Parliament and the Abbey (looking blurred and formless in the driving rain), I indulged in full a long overdue sympathy with the founders of the Indian Empire. Hitherto I had never much cared for people who insisted on founding empires. "Why couldn't they let it alone?" But Hastings, Clive, and the others: did they have to leave England on such grey November mornings as this? I pictured the cold drive in the post-chaise to Tilbury; the wearisome beating down channel; the slow progress of the East Indiaman round the Cape to Calcutta. With a certain joy I remembered that Clive, dare-devil as he was, had a genuine vein of sentiment, and spent "hardly a happy day" for weeks after leaving England. There were distinguished precedents, then, for gloom. . . . With a rattle and a jerk the cab drew up at Victoria.

The reader does me an injustice if he imagines that I am going to drag him in imagination over every foot of the way

from Charing Cross to Marseilles. I dare say he knows it better than I do; has been ill in the Channel more often than I; has practised his imperfect French upon long-suffering officials between Calais and Marseilles perhaps more frequently, and certainly with greater success, than myself. How, then, am I to beguile the journey for him? Here is an old novel which I have been reading. It is entitled "The Lady of the Manor," and purports to be a description of the life of a young lady of quality in Bengal at the close of the eighteenth century. The young lady's name was Olive; and she travelled to India with her friend Miss Burleigh what time George III. was king. In those days it is superfluous to say that there was no overland route to Marseilles. Olive embarked at Tilbury on a stout East Indiaman; and although she—I mean, of course, the East Indiaman—was stout and well-built of British oak, I do not fancy that Olive was quite so comfortable as the Olives of to-day are on the P. & O. liners. "It is impracticable," says the good Mrs Sherwood, Olive's biographer, "to give the inexperienced

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reader any accurate idea of the mode of life generally pursued on an East Indiaman, where a number of persons of all ages and classes are confined together in one place with little to do, and few occasions of acquiring a single new idea." You see the East Indiaman made only one port between —was it Plymouth?—and Calcutta, namely, Cape Town: so that there was plenty of time for meditation. In those days I don't think the young ladies read much. Novels were improper, and moral tales dull. "She (*i.e.*, Olive) and Miss Burleigh spent their mornings in looking over and arranging their dresses, and packing, unpacking, and cleaning their trinkets." Could they have done this every morning? "At three o'clock all the passengers dined together, and I was solicited to drink wine with nearly all the gentlemen at table" — it is the innocent Olive who speaks — "and as Miss Burleigh informed me that I should offend if I refused any of these solicitations, I *sometimes* certainly took much *more* than was *good* for me" (Fie, Olive, fie!); "and if I did not always walk out from the dining-room very

steadily, I *trust* that my unsteadiness was attributed to the *motion* of the *vessel*. After dinner we retired for a short time to our cabin, where we received visits from some of the ladies of the other cabins. At tea-time we went out and sat on deck, or concluded the evening with a dance when the weather would permit." It only remains to say that poor Olive "got a fever" through drinking foul water, and only recovered when, having landed in Calcutta, she was straight-way packed off to the hills.

Her subsequent history does not really concern us; and I have only quoted so much of her biography here, first, because it is not uninteresting as a glimpse of how they travelled to India in the olden time; and second, to beguile, as I say, the journey of the judicious reader from Victoria at least to Calais. See how skilfully I have managed it. We are now at Calais (and a confoundedly rough voyage too, only you didn't notice it); at Calais, lunching in the buffet on the eternal *poulet* and potatoes, and about to discuss briefly the doctrine of Appropriate Emotion.

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I started the discussion (present Sir F——, a young travelling acquaintance who was by way of being a poet, and myself) by alluding to the fact that certain fortunate people could always feel the right emotion at the right time, and could supply the correct epithet on every occasion. I confessed that I could not. When a thing was "considered very fine" it was ten to one that I refused to see the fineness; when it was proper to feel romantic (as on beholding the disappearance of the white cliffs of England), I only felt a certain dread of *mal de mer*.

"Byron could do it," I said, sipping my coffee, "could feel the appropriate emotion. Why couldn't we?"

"But that's just where you are wrong," said my friend promptly. "Byron couldn't, and didn't. No doubt *he thought he did*—afterwards. Looking back, he said to himself: 'Why, of course. That's how I felt leaving England; must have.' And then he sat down and wrote:

and the rest of it. But it's all nonsense. The last thing Childe Harold thought about when crossing the Channel was his faithful dog being fed by stranger hands. It is much more likely that the Childe was seasick, and needed the ministrations of the steward.

"This may seem unkind," continued the young man with animation; "but why not be honest with ourselves? Only second-rate people pretend to feel emotions which they don't feel. On your travels you will meet large numbers of persons who will so pretend. They will tell you of the magnificent emotions that surged through them on first seeing the Pyramids—or the Taj Mahal—or any great work of art or nature, when the fact is that at the critical moment their dominant thought was that—well, that tight boots were the most annoying things in the world, or some other perfectly natural and not discreditable feeling. Oh! it is best to be honest. You will often find that the great emotions won't come to order. The small ones are ever ready to take their place."

"But sometimes——"

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come. The great building will strike you into silence with its beauty; the lovely landscape will fill your soul with a sudden incomprehensible ecstasy. But you will not go away and chatter about it."

The train was running swiftly towards Paris under grey skies, through scudding rain. It was so different from the sunny France of one's dreams. And yet indubitably it was France: witness the straight poplar-shaded roads; the red-tiled roofs of the cottages; the blue-bloused peasants working in the fields. But a French railway train in winter is not conducive to admiration of the scenery through which the train passes. Its atmosphere is too oppressively warm. "Beaucoup de chaleur," some one murmurs, as you sink into a fitful slumber. . . . South of Paris the train speeds along the valley of the Seine. You lazily regard the long stretches of level country; the red-brown soil; the tints of the autumn foliage; the sage-green cottage roofs; the needle spires of the village churches. . . . But night is coming down. Look within. They have served dinner, and the crowd of hungry travellers jostle into the dining car. I am

seated opposite to a fat, good-natured Frenchman; Sir F—— has *vis-à-vis* an ancient but highly robust Englishman.

ANCIENT ENGLISHMAN (*to Sir F.*).—"This youth who addresses you, sir—guess how old he is?"

SIR F. (*incuriously*).—"Dunno."

A. E.—"Fourscore and one, sir, that's my age; an' enjoyed my life—every bit of it. Matter of fact, enjoy it now."

SIR F. (*admiringly*).—"Well, well!"

A. E. (*taking soup*).—"Yes, sir. Know why?"

SIR F.—"No."

A. E. (*with ill-concealed spiritual pride*).—"I take no thought, sir (gobble, gobble)—for the morrow. Nothing like it—noth-ing!"

[Some of us wonder how it is done.]

THE FRENCHMAN (*volubly, but with splendid good-nature, addressing myself*).—"Japonais—vous voyez—Russes—Français—eh?"

AUTHOR.—"Oui, m'sieur."

F. (*delighted*).—"Vous comprenez—grand bataille—Japonais—Français—Russes . . . n'est-ce-pas?"

A. (*emphatically*).—"Mais oui, certain-

ment." (*Sotto voce*: "Que le diable . . . dans cette galère.")

SIR F. (*solemnly*).—"Seeing you are getting on so well with your French friend, you might kindly ask him, generally, what the condition of trade is in France at the present time; how many workmen are unemployed; and whether any, and if so, what, proportion of unemployment is to be attributed to the fiscal system obtaining in this country. I understand (possibly this may help you somewhat) that the French word for trade is 'commerce.'"

[*Mr Author laughs; the Frenchman, uncomprehending, but out of pure good-nature, laughs also.*]

CONDUCTOR (*putting in his head at door*).—"Marseilles. Nous avons arrivés, messieurs."

CHAPTER II

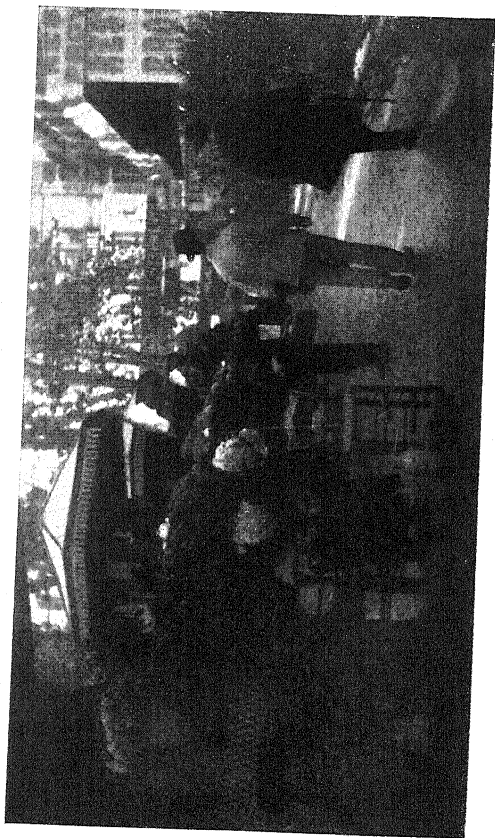
MARSEILLES TO PORT SAID

MARSEILLES is a noble city of broad boulevards, spacious docks, handsome buildings: a city of blue skies and sunshine and flowers. You will find a full description in the guide-books, which usually, however, omit any reference to the shoeblacks. Strolling down by the Bourse, and chaunting (with reference to the Hotel Du Louvre et de la Paix) the words of Omar:

“’Tis but a tent where takes his one day’s rest,
A Sultan to the realms of death addrest,”

I found myself suddenly seized by the ankle, brought to a full stop in consequence, and forcibly detained. Looking down, I perceived a diminutive boy clasping my leg with one hand, while with the other he made violent attempts to polish the imprisoned boot. I was at first inclined to reason with the youth: to point out that the boot was already in a

condition of perfect polish: that in any case I had not asked for what in dear Cockaigne was called a "shine," but I forbore. In the first place, I had hardly sufficient French; secondly, I had a Thackerayan feeling of wishing to bestow a gratuity upon the small boy; and thirdly, and most potently, I discovered that I was outflanked by a body of diminutive but determined shoeblacks, obviously possessed with the idea of giving the English stranger an extended succession of "shines." Every avenue of escape was cut off. Wherefore I capitulated, distributed *sous* somewhat freely, and was glad to think that the Marseilles shoeblacks were not wholly disappointed. . . . Do the guide-books mention the flower market of Marseilles? Be sure to visit it: a cheerful and lively scene. Observe the row of kiosks with their presiding goddesses. Here, Briton-like, I made a snapshot. Immediately afterwards another goddess came forward from somewhere in the background. "Vous avez tiré, m'sieur?" she asks disappointedly. "Oui, m'amselle, mais encore." The goddess poses; there is another snapshot; and everybody is satisfied.



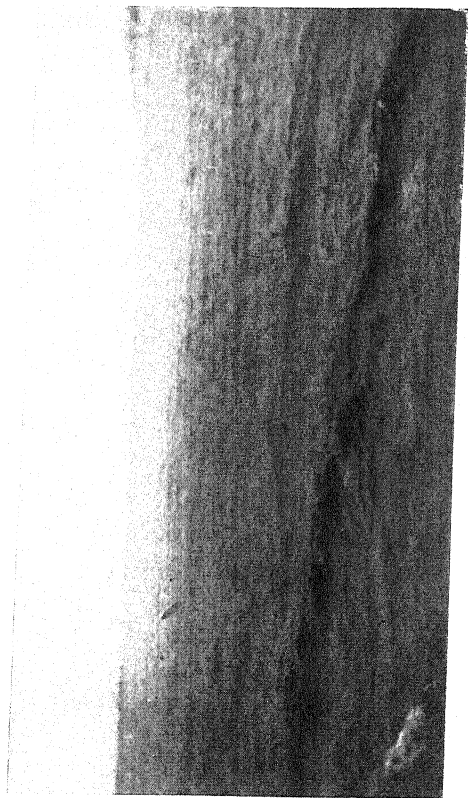
THE FLOWER MARKET, MARSEILLES.



But if the flower market be cheerful and lively, how much more lively and cheerful is the quay where lies the great ship which is to bring us to India! Stand here on the promenade deck and look down. Crowds of bare-footed Lascars, clad in many-coloured garments, but generally red as to their turbans, swarm over ship and quay. Heaven knows what the brown fellows are doing, but they all have the air of being exceedingly busy. Here, too, on the wharf are the sellers of lace and of flowers; acrobats turning somersaults and cart-wheels (what is the French, I wonder, for "cart-wheel"?); dancing and singing girls, with skirts that once were gay; a performing dog, that walks gravely up and down carrying an open parasol; players on the harp, the violin, the zither, and numerous other instruments; children singing and screaming for *sous*: all seek alms from the departing traveller. . . . Twelve o'clock strikes. The big ship at once commences to move off from the wharf. The dancers dance; the acrobat does surprising things with feverish quickness; the little dog rushes madly up and down, holding the

parasol anyhow; the players on musical instruments give us the *Marseillaise* in a bewildering variety of keys; all the little figures, indeed, hopeful of final *sous*, go through their paces with the mechanical vigour of marionnettes. Slowly the clear space between ship and quay widens. The music grows faint in the distance: stops. The marionnettes turn homewards. Still slowly we work our way out of the harbour. Behind us now lies the city; behind it are the grey fortified hills, cut sharp and ragged against the clear sky. Past the Chateau D'If we glide, the quarantine stations, Nôtre Dame de la Garde (yes, my dear travelled reader, I am sure you have seen this noble cathedral, perched steeply on its rock, and know how fine and impressive it is), out into the Mediterranean, which now, though not always, justifies the inevitable adjective. The coast line recedes to the north more and more. Soon there is nothing but sky and sea. . . .

“Eothen” Kinglake speaks somewhere of the great charm of travel in the East being that you can escape “the stale civilisation of Europe.” That would be a great charm,



"THE COAST LINE RECEDES MORE AND MORE."



if it were true. But nowadays it is not true. Wherever you go that "stale civilisation" goes with you, or is there before you, or, perchance, follows you. It has its pleasant aspects. Between ourselves, there is something very agreeable to the Cockney in the reflection that, wherever the British Flag waves, there he will find, not only freedom, but also the soda-water bottle. There is something astonishingly cheerful in the thought that wherever you may wander, east or west, by land or sea, food and drink will be brought to you, just as good as that which you are accustomed to have at your club in Pall Mall. But to a young, ardent, untravelled spirit there is also something frightfully depressing in this persistence of European civilisation. For what does it mean? It means that always, always, you will meet vulgar, over-fed, *nil admirari* people who have been everywhere, have seen everything, esteem all things vanity, and do not hesitate to tell you so. Travel has not improved them, because travel only improves people of intelligence, and they have none. They visit a conventional "place of interest," not because they enjoy it, but

to be able to talk about it afterwards; to brag about it to some one who has not been there. If you speak enthusiastically of B, they promptly chill your enthusiasm by informing you that B is well enough, but that no one who has ever visited C considers B worth another thought. Afterwards, when you visit C, you find it infinitely inferior to B. If you are only going to India, these people will sympathise with you because you are not going on to Burmah; if haply you are bound for Burmah, they will indicate that no person of sense refrains from visiting Cochin-China or Japan. Travel, I repeat, does not improve the *nil admirari*. He (or she, for it is sometimes she) rarely deviates into intelligence in conversation: rarely forsakes those conventional topics, or outsteps the conventional limits of those conventional topics, characteristic of respectable suburban or county society. Therefore, do not trouble, my dear young *nil admirari*—do not trouble, on your grand tour, to be kind, or thoughtful, or fresh, or enthusiastic. *Be correct*. You are disposed to take an interest in the coloured subjects of His Majesty—to sympathise with

these poor, patient, brown fellows toiling there (and for you) so cheerfully under that hot sun. For Heaven's sake, be careful. "*Nobody* does that in the best society—in *our* society, dear Nil. Come away and play bridge. In any case, bring your sister into the saloon at once. Many of these negroes ("Indians, mother!") well, Indians then—are not properly clad. . . ."

But what is all this about, Mr Author? Who has been bored by your elegant conversation? Who has repulsed your alleged eager and informing talk on men and things? And indeed I confess that these remarks are founded on a two or three days' survey of the first-class passengers on board the P. & O. s.s. *Marperbia*. There were exceptions. I want to make it clear that I do not include X and Y and Z and other charming and good people whom it was my privilege to meet on this voyage to India; but I am sure that they would agree with me (didn't they say so, one evening as we coasted along by Crete?) that snobbery travels first-class, and sits in the chairs on the promenade deck. It may be well to make correctness a god in Mayfair: it preserves, I suppose, the purity of the

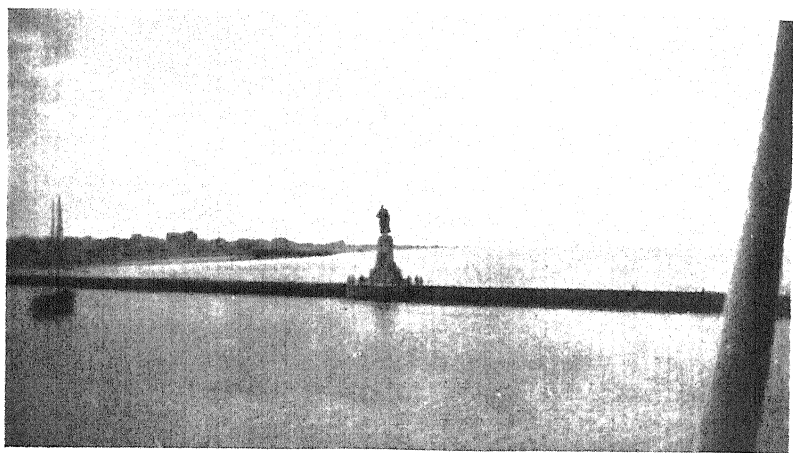
great Trade Union, Society; but in Heaven's name, why not be human in the Red Sea? Come down with me into the second saloon. Here everybody knows everybody; takes tea, laughs, plays, talks with everybody. There is a spirit of good fellowship in this part of the ship. "But aren't they dreadfully vulgar?" I think I hear Mrs Admirari ask. To which I answer: "Sometimes they are. Sometimes they slap you on the back, literally or metaphorically, and I dislike to be slapped on the back by strangers. But, madam, you will find 'dreadful vulgarity' on the saloon deck also—it knocks with equal foot at all men's cabins. It is vulgar to talk at the top of your voice when you know you are disturbing others; vulgar to be cordial in the evening and rude in the morning; vulgar to overload your person with jewellery (I have seen fourteen rings on your fingers, ma'am); vulgar to have an excessive *décolletage*; vulgar——" But this sermon is long enough. All unkindness, pettiness, commonness, is vulgar. Here is an illustration which occurs to me:

One sunny afternoon the saloon deck of the

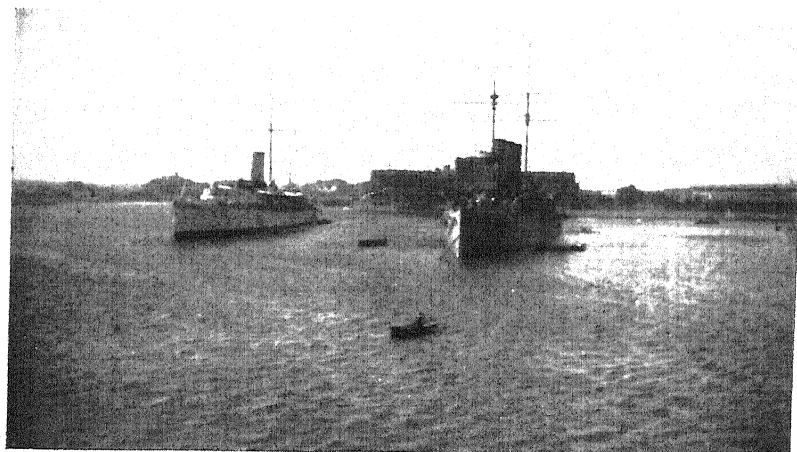
Marperbia was crowded with passengers. They had lunched, and were happy, but somnolent. Here were a party of bridge-players, silent and grim; there a party, more energetic, tossing quoits; but mostly these passengers kept very quiet on deck chairs, and refrained from activity, mental or physical. Presently a sail was sighted in the distance. This brought quite a number of the somnolent passengers to the ship's side, for it was in the early days of the voyage, and "sails" were not yet boredom. Nearer came the vessel; and now we could see that it was a dirty, misshapen, tramp steamer, slowly making its way, no doubt, from the African to the Italian coast. It came still nearer, taking a diagonal course with reference to the *Marperbia*, until one could almost have thrown a biscuit from our deck to hers. Then we saw her crew. They were leaning lazily on the rail, watching us with enquiring eyes: strange, swarthy, cut-throat-looking fellows. (I hoped they were pirates.) Suddenly something happened. The pirates, taking us for ordinary human creatures, for brothers and sisters in humanity, began to wave us a

greeting. There was no reply. The pirates waved again: hats and coloured kerchiefs, and anything that was handy. Still there was no reply from the *Marperbia's* saloon. The hands of several fine ladies and gentlemen stole towards their pockets. Perhaps it would be permissible to wave a cambric. Glances were exchanged. Nobody liked to begin. In any case, wasn't it just a little . . . *outré*? Would nobody wave? The moment passed. Hands dropped nervelessly to sides. As for the pirates, they looked at each other, laughed a little, began to replace hats on heads and kerchiefs on necks. But what is that? Back in the second saloon the passengers have grasped the situation. A cloud of white handkerchiefs flutters out. Hip! Hip! Hurrah! The pirates cheer and wave; the second saloon waves and cheers; by a superb effort the first saloon refrains from either waving or cheering at this little bit of drama. In a few moments it is over. The gap between the ships widens. The pirates go their way, we go ours. Humanity had been vindicated by the vulgar people at the stern.





DE LESSEPS' STATUE, PORT SAID.



AT THE MOUTH OF THE CANAL.

Travel with every modern luxury is all very well, but some day I shall follow the example of the late Mr Kinglake. Quiet Cockney as I am, I shall take a tramp steamer (with perhaps one friend) to some eastern port; shall disembark there and make my way to a land untrodden by tourists—away from polite society, away from the tittle-tattle of small people; to some spacious land where, wandering as we like, we may dress and think and talk, or refrain from talk, as we like; admire the beauty of God's earth or refrain from admiration; live the free, natural life of human creatures unstified by the petty limitations which fools so successfully impose on wise men. . . .

“And then, Mr Author, you would not be happy. You would sigh for the purple trappings of civilisation. You would miss your little dinner in the evening. Perhaps you would get indigestion. . . .”

Perhaps. . . . Meanwhile, there is the long, low line of coast which is Port Said. We have traversed the Mediterranean without storm or wind or rain; perfect summer days and glorious nights of stars; and surely that is well.

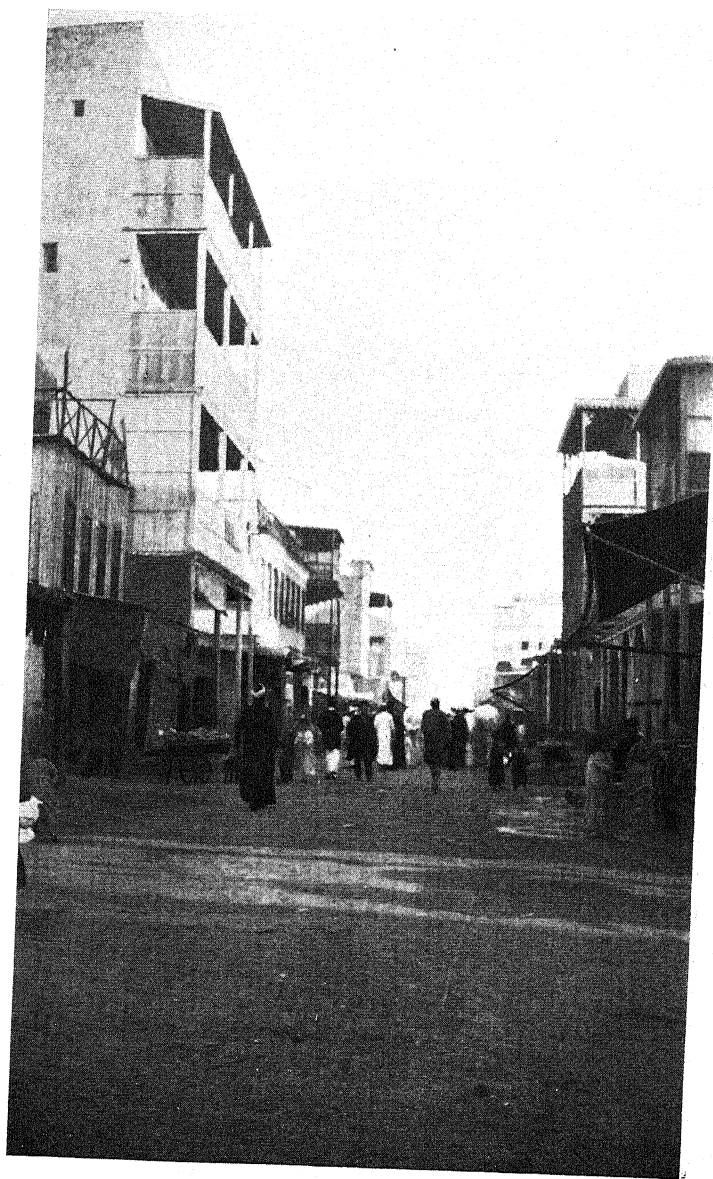
CHAPTER III

PORT SAID

"The first day in the East is like that. After that there is nothing. The wonder is gone, and the thrill of that delightful shock, which so seldom touches the nerves of plain men of the world, though they seek for it everywhere. . . .

"A man only sees the miracle once; though you yearn over it so, it won't come again."—THACKERAY.

AT Port Said you meet the East. With all its meanness of aspect, its cosmopolitanism, its air of being quite modern, the town is still for the Western the principal gateway to what he likes to consider as the enchanted realms of the East. And it really has the Eastern atmosphere. The houses, square, flat-roofed, verandah'd, are Eastern; the vocable, crowded streets are Eastern; the clear air and sky are Eastern. Look; there is the dome and tapering minarets of a mosque, by which you know that the faith and morals of these people are different from the faith and morals



held by Milton. You are in the land of the Dome. Never mind your St Peters and St Pauls; the West is the land of the Spire and the Cross; the East is the land of the Dome and the Crescent. We shan't see much of Dome-and-Crescent Land on this side of India; but Port Said gives us a glimpse of it; suggests, in all sorts of ill-defined ways, the well-defined essential differences between East and West. But I have no intention of dogmatising on these differences at this point (or at any point). I should properly incur the rebuke of the Intelligent Eastern:

"Sir, I landed at Tilbury yesterday, and was surprised to see, on arriving at Fenchurch Street, a drunken woman being dragged along by two persons described to me as 'Bobbies.' I should like to know, sir, if you have ever in the East . . ."

On the whole, it is best to keep to the harmless inessentials. I think I could suggest Port Said in three tableaux.

TABLEAU I

[Scene: Verandah of the Hotel Continental,

Port Said. Passengers from s.s. *Marperbia* : take tea, purchase picture post-cards, and watch the tide of multi-coloured Eastern life flowing up and down the street. The multi - coloured include blacks, browns, yellows, and chocolates: prevailing tint brown, and prevailing profession donkey-boy. In one group of tea - drinking passengers is discovered Sir F——, the author of this narrative, and a sunburnt Indian missionary.]

SIR F. (*waving a stick towards the multi-coloured*).—"This, my friend, is the East: 'the gorgeous East' is, I believe, the term used by Wordsworth. I hope you like it."

AUTHOR (*feeling around for a suitable observation*).—"It — er — satisfies. The movement, the light, the colour——"

SIR F.—"Possibly it satisfies, but it is never satisfied. There is one word ever on their tongues. Listen."

(*Many voices*).—"Backsheesh! Hi! Backsheesh!"

SIR F. (*continuing*).—"You observe. The craving for gain is not confined to the West. No."

THE MISSIONARY.—"They make me sad,

these people. What is their life? Whence come they, and whither are they going? They know not. They live in the dark."

AUTHOR.—"Do not be sad, my friend. Look; these people laugh. Laughter is ever in their eyes and on the lips. You see more sombre faces among the poor of England. As for 'the dark': do we then live wholly in the light?"

[The Missionary shakes his head sorrowfully.]

SELLER OF POST CARDS (to Author).—"Hi, you Scotchman from Dublin!"

AUTHOR (*startled, for he has Scoto-Irish friends*).—"Eh?"

S.P.C.—"You want some-sing—any-sing?"

[He displays his wares. I select half a dozen coloured cards.]

S.P.C.—"I sell you stamps; me pos' office, too" (*laughs*).

[I take six stamps.]

AUTHOR.—"These will take the cards to England?"

S.P.C.—"England? Yaas—'Merica—Jippan—anywhere."

[I hand him money.]

S.P.C.—"I go for change" (*disappears*).

AUTHOR (*sol.*).—"He will never come back."

[*But he comes back beaming, and hands over the change.*]

AUTHOR (*with emotion*).—"Sir, I perceive you are an honest man."

S.P.C. (*with some hauteur in voice*).—"Sir, I *am* an honest man. You want some-sing—any-sing?" (*disappears*).

[*Afterwards I discover that the stamps are halfpenny stamps, and will not take the cards outside Egypt. The S.P.C. had therefore made an illegitimate profit of 3d.*]

AUTHOR (*resignedly*).—"It is kismet."

(*Chorus of many voices*).—"Hi! Backsheesh! Donkey, sir? Ha! Mr Ferguson, I know you!"

[The tide flows on. Jews, Greeks, and barbarians, the latter including negroes of full blood, half- and quarter-castes, Arabs, Egyptians, and countless other varieties, continue to promenade before the tea - drinking host. Sellers of curios, lace, cigars and cigarettes, cry their wares in raucous voices.





Here and there a dark-eyed woman, staring at the strangers over her yashmak, flits through the crowd. The sun begins to sink westerly, and paints the gaunt Port Said buildings in many shades of yellow. Still the tide flows on, and apparently will flow "voluble to all eternity."]

TABLEAU II

[A mosque in the native town. At the door stands a faithful Mussulman crying, "Ullah-Ull-ah-ah!" in an enormous voice. Close by is discovered a knot of curious *Marperbia* passengers. Many urchins are in their train. To them approaches the Beadle, carrying a number of straw overshoes.]

THE BEADLE (*to passengers*).—"Zis way—here, I tell you. Look, I bring shoes."

[*He seizes a stout passenger violently by the calf of the leg and attempts to thrust stout passenger's foot into overshoe.*]

STOUT PASSENGER (*indignantly*).—"Whoa! What the dickens——"

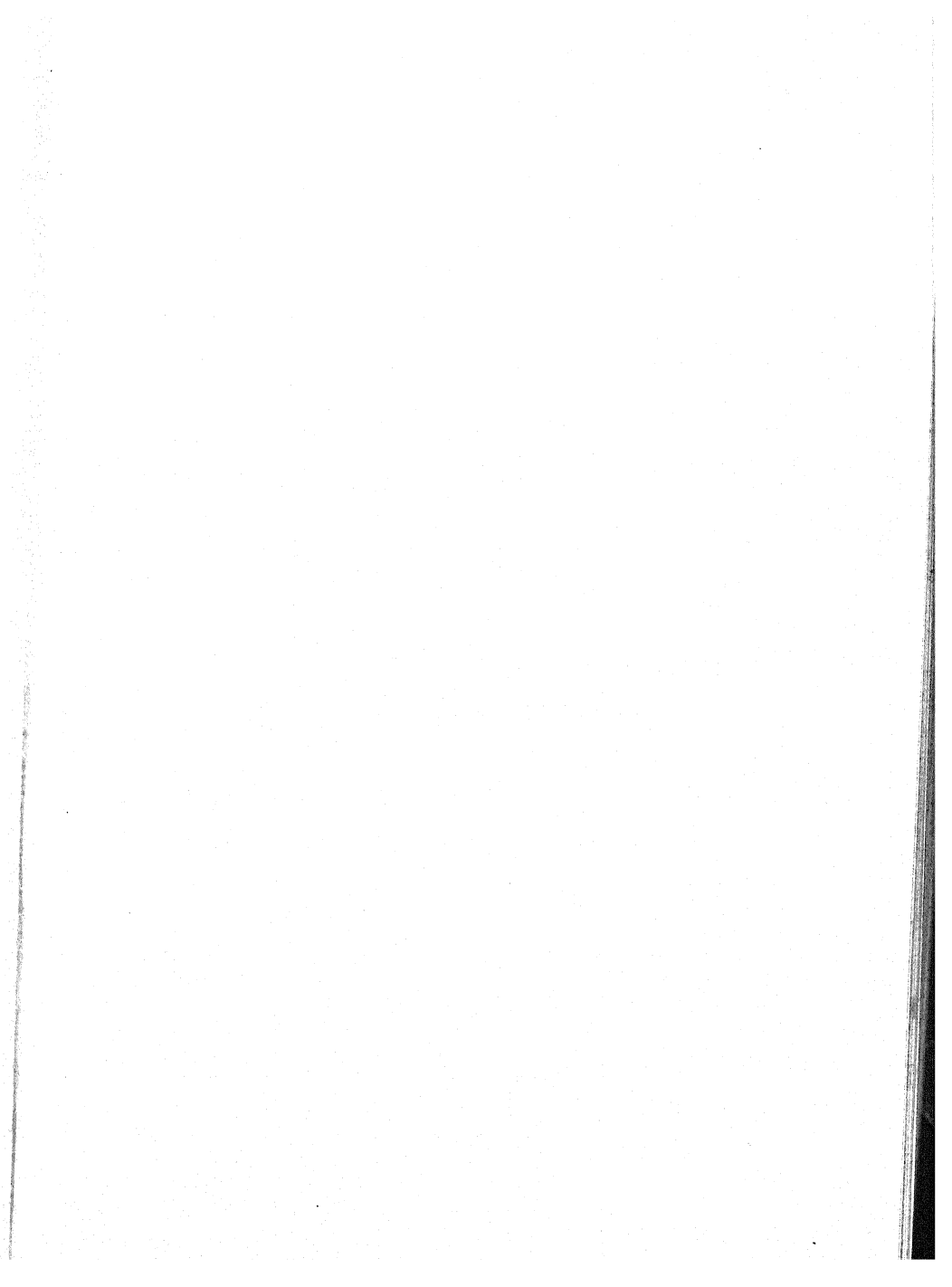
BEADLE (*peremptorily, and tugging at stout passenger*).—"Quick, I tell you. You are Christians: all Christians must have shoes."

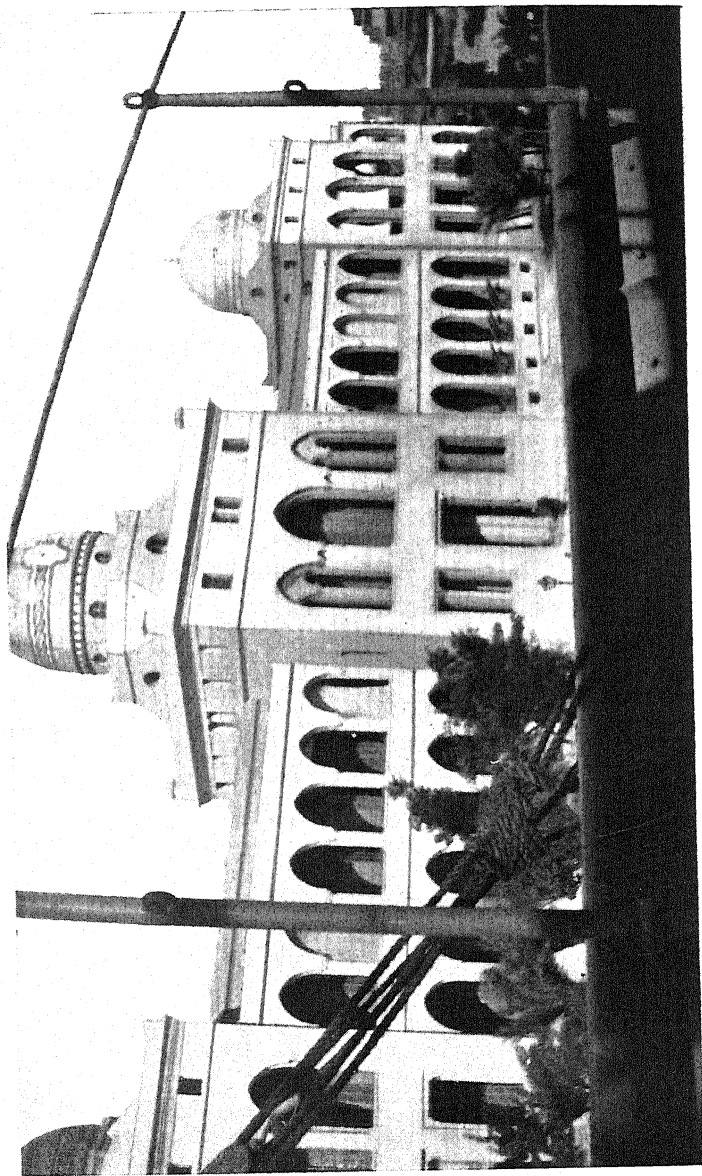
AUTHOR (*with reminiscence of judicial dictum*).—"I do not see the necessity."

A PRETTY GIRL.—"I'm sure *I* don't—horrid things!"

[*By degrees the passengers are overshoe'd. They disappear within the mosque. The scene changes to the interior. It is a lofty, airy mosque, with matted floor, on which are many seated figures engaged in devotion.*]

BEADLE (*importantly and with great rapidity*).—"Come—come—zis way. *Zis way*, I tell you. See, these people pray (*pointing to various Mussulmans engaged in violent exercise of bowing foreheads to earth many times per minute*). They pray, I tell you. Come—come—towards Mecca—now you look—the Mecca niche—you look—zis way—the Mullah (*a person sidles up with an extraordinary gleam of backsheesh in his eyes*). You give no backsheesh to our Mullah? No? Come—





"THE MOSQUE-LIKE BUILDING OF THE CANAL COMPANY,"

zis way—the Koran . . . Mecca niche—they pray, you see. . . . Gif' me two shillin'. . . .”

[*He collects shillings rapidly, and without ceremony hurries off to a crowd of fresh arrivals. The pilgrims kick off their shoes at the door with a listless air.*]

THE PRETTY GIRL.—“There wasn't *very* much to see, was there?”

TABLEAU III

[Being a dialogue between the Author and the Poet on the deck of the *Marperbia*. The steamer is lying at the entrance to the Canal, just opposite the mosque-like building of the Canal Company. A babel of noise from the starboard side of the ship indicates that coaling operations are in progress. But the two gentlemen referred to have not been watching the coaling: they have been watching their first Egyptian sunset.]

AUTHOR.—“A green sunset—a vivid green, mind you. I have never seen its like before.”

POET.—“Nor I. Of course, we have *shades*

of green in our Western sunsets. Don't you remember Coleridge :

'It were a vain endeavour
That I should gaze for ever
On that green light that lingers in the West?''

AUTHOR.—"I confess I do not remember Coleridge. But it was fine to see how the light changed—green, gold, mauves, scarlets——"

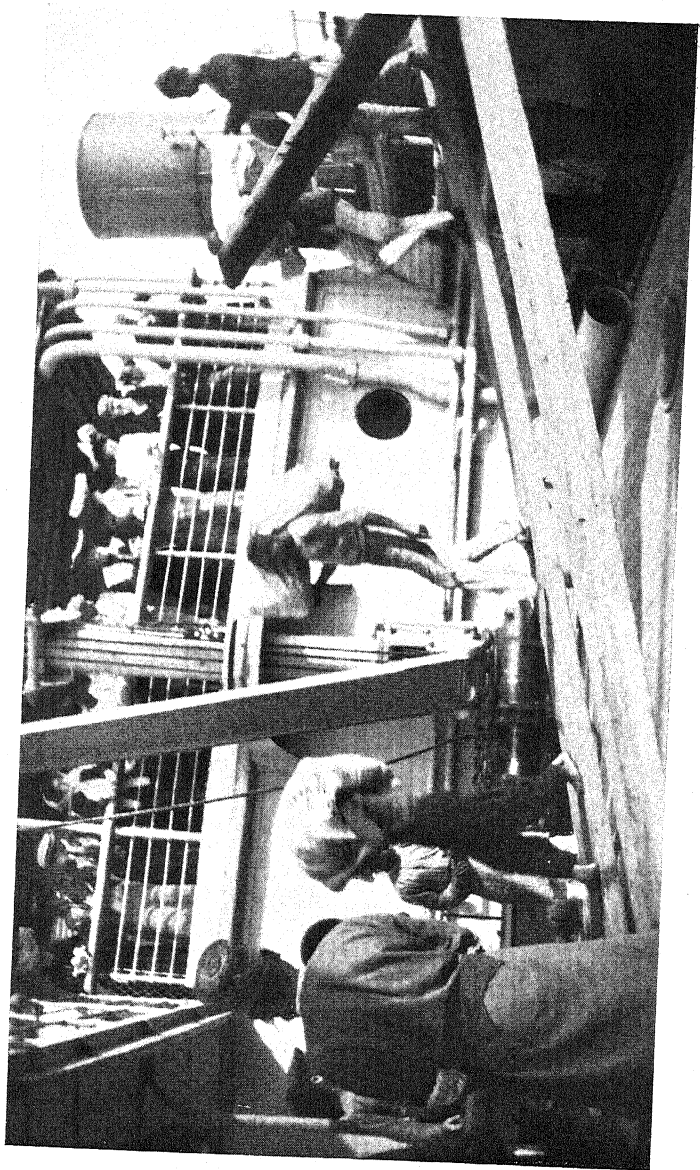
POET.—"Yes. But who can describe a sunset?"

AUTHOR.—"Many people think they can. William Black, Miss Corelli——"

POET.—"It is impossible. You are face to face with what Mr Gissing called 'the foolish insufficiency of words.' Take Black. You read pages of description, and you say to yourself, perchance, 'Very fine.' Yes; but it is the description which is fine—the agglomeration of words: the thing itself, the sunset, is hardly suggested to your mind. That is not the true way to describe a sunset."

AUTHOR.—"What is the true way? I ask, like Miss Dartle, for information."

POET.—"The true way is—not to describe it. Suggest it. Use six words instead of six



PORT SAID: BRINGING ON THE MAILS.



hundred, and perhaps your reader may get a glimpse of the glory."

AUTHOR (*sadly*).—"These things are too deep for me."

POET.—"Even Thackeray, who was not very poetical, understood this. You remember his 'Waterloo' chapter in 'Vanity Fair,' and the ending: George Osborne lying on the battle-field 'dead, with a bullet through his heart.' Doesn't that one sentence suggest the scene more successfully than pages of description?"

[*The sun disappears while they talk.*

In a marvellously short time it is night: night, but with a full moon rising clear over the desert. Far as the eye can reach stretches the sand, shining white as snow in the moonlight. In the middle foreground a string of camels shuffles along. It does not matter what they look like. They are camels.]

AUTHOR.—"A desolate scene. One can hardly believe that yon vast solitude is known to man. Yet I suppose there are well-beaten tracks of commerce across it. Is there any civilised land

between this ship and Syria? I doubt it. But, Heavens! what a Cockney I am! No doubt that desert has seen as much traffic as the Roman road from Genoa to Marseilles, only the sand wipes out all traces. Didn't Napoleon lead his army across there to Syria? Haven't countless armies, Turk and Christian, crossed by that route from Egypt to the East? And think of that cool Englishman, Alec Kinglake, making his way from Palestine to plague-stricken Cairo on camel-back through that wilderness of sand! But the desert *looks* as if nobody had ever been there."

POET (*yawning*). — "It does. Meanwhile, it's getting late, isn't it? I think I shall turn in."

[*Does so. The Author remains on deck, revolving many things in his mind.*]

Night at Port Said falls on a weird scene. At the mouth of the Canal lie the big ships. Round them are grouped dim, shapeless masses which are barges laden with coal. Lights flare out here and there over the waters. From the barges to the ships is a constant procession of hurrying, demon-like figures, bearing diminutive

burdens on their backs. There is no quietness of night here. The little demons shout as they work: when they stop shouting, they stop working. The air is full of clamour and noise. Black dust settles over everything. Conceive a picture of calm waters, stars, giant steamships, flaming torches, hurrying manikins. . . . Mr Whistler took the trouble of going to Valparaiso, and of painting it by night. I wish he had painted Port Said.

CHAPTER IV

PORT SAID TO ADEN

THE traveller in the East urgently requires synonyms for two English words: one is "interesting," the other, "picturesque." Both words are of poor quality. "Interesting" is flat, and entirely undescriptive; "picturesque" is weak. But you want these words, or synonyms for them, in the East. I say so at this point because I found the Suez Canal both interesting and picturesque. Interesting: for there was something to enchain the attention at every kilomètre-post; an isolated station with its small curious crowd of blue-bloused officials, nondescript hangers-on, and tall, swarthy Arabs; a disreputable-looking tramp steamer or a mighty Austrian Lloyd liner tied up to let the mail go by; a monster dredger at work clearing the channel. And picturesque: for I cannot forget that

romantic passage of the Canal by moonlight, sliding silently for hours between great banks of snowy sand, steaming swiftly across the Bitter Lakes, where firefly lights gleamed and danced. I have heard of ungrateful persons who grumble at the time occupied in passing through the Canal. There are drawbacks, no doubt: mosquitoes, smells, and a suspension of the morning bath for lack of clean sea-water. But the only objection I feel inclined to make is that the Canal, with all its interest, is not so exciting as the old route from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea: disembarking at Alexandria, travelling by barge to Cairo, and then journeying across the desert to Suez by camel or other primitive conveyance.

Suez we passed in our sleep; when we awoke we were far out in the Gulf. I wondered vaguely where the Children of Israel had passed through this sea in their flight from Egypt. Yonder were some red-brown hills and a sandy shore. Did they come along by the foot of those hills and cross the sea at a point opposite to where our great ship was steadily ploughing its way through those same waters that swamped the hosts of

Pharaoh? Or was it further back, somewhere by Port Tewfik or Suez, that Moses led his people towards freedom? I wondered. I did not know then, I do not know now; but the reader may consult what wise men have written about it and form his own conclusions.¹ This, however, I will say: that I decline, at the bidding of any critics, Higher or Lower, to give up that splendid story of Moses, and Pharaoh, and the Children of Israel. Perhaps it is a fairy tale; but nowadays we want to keep all the fairy tales we can, and this is one of the best. Also I keep it in its crudest and most pictorial form. I will have none of your "natural phenomenon" theory; I scorn the suggestion that the tide was out. No; the East wind was a special kind of east wind: the water was deep. Through the sea a way was cloven. There was a path of dry sand between great blue walls of water—I insist on those walls; and along this path and between those walls marched the Children of Israel, headed by Moses. (Can't you fancy the splendid confidence of that leader?—the timid glances of the men, now towards the

¹ See Appendix to this chapter.

water, now towards the rear where the enemy pressed? Not of the women—they clasped their babies tighter, and prayed as they hurried; besides, I am sure that they believed in Moses.) Then imagine the great *débâcle* at the end, when the great blue walls suddenly collapsed on the proud hosts of Pharaoh, and the Israelites, looking back, saw men and horses and chariots all struggling and whirling about in the angry waters. That is too good a story lightly to give up.

And now in the Red Sea it began to grow hot. There were various infallible signs of increase in temperature. Out came the punkahs in the saloon; the ship's officers donned their white sun-helmets, the stewards their linen suits. Warm day followed warm day monotonously enough. Grumblers made themselves heard: "The Red Sea, you know." For my part, I had often felt it hotter in Fleet Street in July; wherefore I refrained from grumbling. But some curious effects of the heat I did notice. One was a certain hypnotic feeling that came in these Red Sea days: a sensation possibly induced by constant gazing at water and sky, of having been thus sailing over

warm summer seas for æons of time. When did we begin our journey? When should we reach an end? Another feeling more difficult to analyse was discernible—a feeling of depression, isolation, a sense of alone-ness. Standing, like Matthew Arnold, at the vessel's prow one night, it was difficult to realise Arnold's consolation in the shining of the stars or in the "long moon-silvered roll" of the sea; the "pain of finite hearts that yearn" was so much more insistent. Odd to think that if one slipped overboard there in the moonlight, down into those calm, cruel waters, it would really make little difference to anybody—well, to anybody nearer than two thousand miles away. Odd to think that there was not a personality on the ship which really responded to one's own. Tinkle, tinkle went the piano on deck. I heard the shuffling of dancers' feet. Why not join the merrymakers? Why not put away morbid thoughts? Why, indeed? The universe was not constructed entirely for the convenience of one person. This whining about isolation was simply egoism, and egoism of a very sickly kind, no doubt. But still the melancholy remained, and I put it down

to purely physical causes: the generous table of the P. & O. Company, for example, and the Red Sea climate. "No, my dear fellow," said I to myself, "it is not that, like so many modern heroines, you are 'misunderstood.' It is not that among four hundred first-class passengers you have failed to find a kindred spirit. The man who is unhappy because he fails to find kindred spirits on an ocean liner is a fool. It is not that your exquisitely sensitive Celtic soul revolts at the commonness of first-class humanity. Far, far from it. It is dinners—and a tropical climate."

I observed the same phenomenon in others. Sir F——, for example, confided in me that nothing would ever induce him to visit India again. "The tedium of this voyage is so trying," he said. Several attractive young ladies, wearing engagement rings, and obviously on their way to be married in India, hinted darkly at cruel fates and tragical illusions. "I am sure, Mr Author," said Miss P—— (a brunette with soft eyes and tiny white hands), "I am sure you will understand me* when I say that the heart too often deceives itself. It imagines that things are so, when, alas!

they are not so. Too late we find it out. Too late do we discover that those bright hopes on which we built so foolishly, but so lovingly, are destined never, never to be fulfilled." At sentiments such as these Mr Author would smile a little sardonically; and as a matter of history, Miss P—— looked ridiculously happy when, a month later, she stood as a bride at the altar in Bombay Cathedral.

And then I must not forget the Poet (whom I shall hereafter designate as "J."), who was affected by the same strange melancholy. On that night of moonlight and music he came up to me as I stood on deck, looking out over the sea. All day long we had been skirting the Arabian coast, surely the most desolate coast between Charing Cross and Delhi. Great red hills of rock, without a single touch of verdure; hills that stood out with sharp, serrated edges against the blue sky, with no sign of life upon them, carrying nameless and undefined suggestions of loneliness and horror. Somewhere on that terrible coast-line was Jeddah; further back in the interior was Mecca, the holy place; so that this

country was not entirely bereft of humanity. Fierce, fanatical pilgrims marched over it in the burning sun, willing to die there "or attain"; but to us who regarded it from this vantage of Western civilisation it was the abomination of desolation.

J.—"I have been writing about it to-day. I have tried to crystallise in a few verses the emotion stirred up by yon red wilderness."

AUTHOR.—"Show them to me."

J. (*with some surprise*).—"Do you care to see it?"

AUTHOR.—"I thought you had known me by this time."

J.—"Your pardon, Author. I had forgotten. Few men in health care about poetry; perhaps rightly. Look at the men on this ship."

AUTHOR.—"The able seamen?"

J.—"The passengers. Good fellows, but all rubbed to the same type: clean, muscular; splendid animals. Did you see them cock-fighting to-day? And running in the bun and brandy-and-soda race? Oh, I envy them! They enjoy life. They are idolised by women. Nothing troubles them."

AUTHOR (*aside*).—"Climate! climate!"

J. (*continuing*).—"We poets are melancholy, diseased creatures. Harold Frederic was right. Art is decadence. Artistic nations are decadent nations."

AUTHOR.—"You were speaking of a poem."

J. (*drawing paper from pocket*).—"It is not very good. But you shall hear it" (*reads*):

*I had a dream of mountains by the sea :
Bare, flinty, hills ;
Nor shade, nor rills.
I climbed until God's heaven touchéd me.*

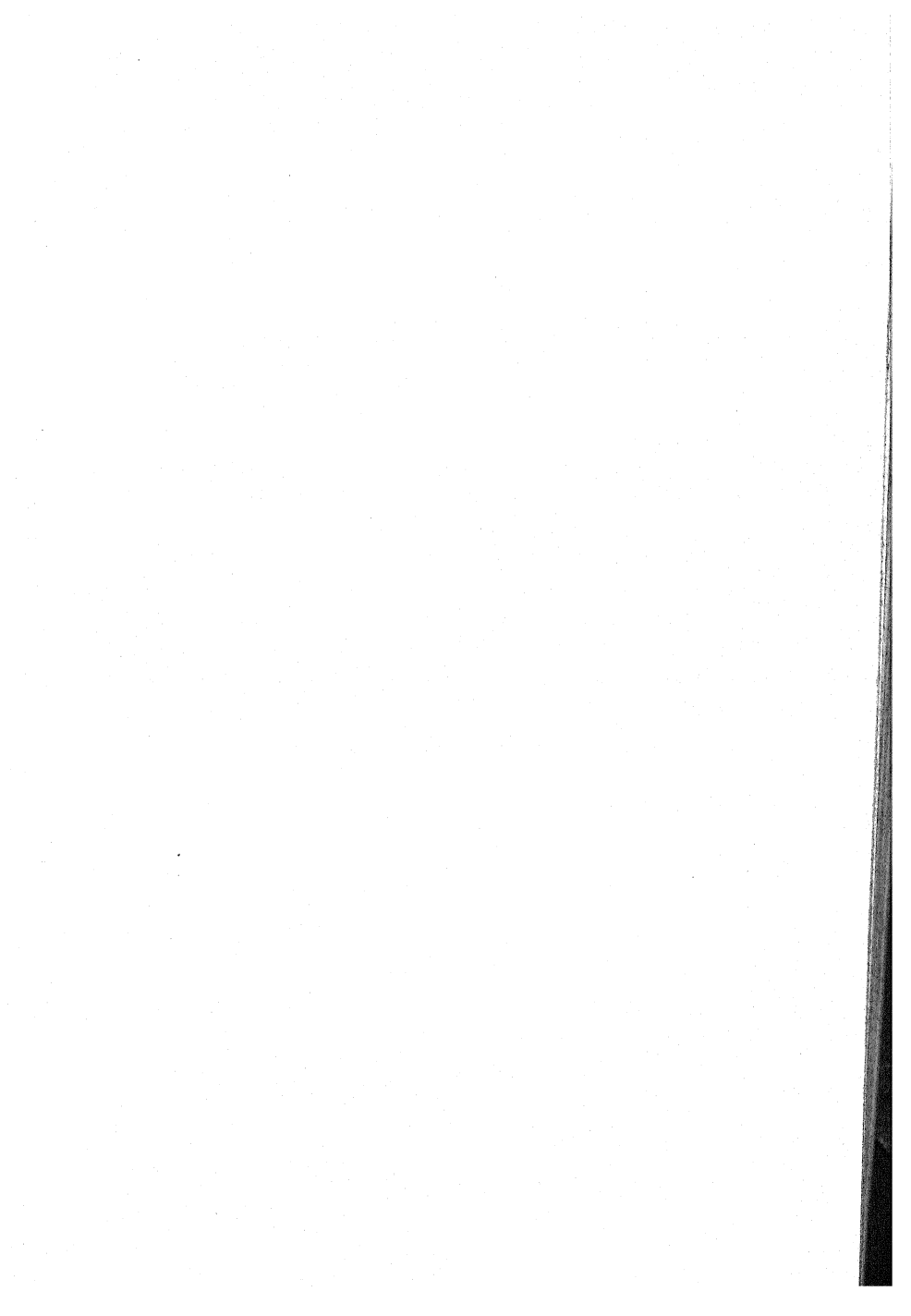
*No one to help or pity, none to love.
The shimmering sea
Did mock at me.
The dreadful sun burned on me from above.*

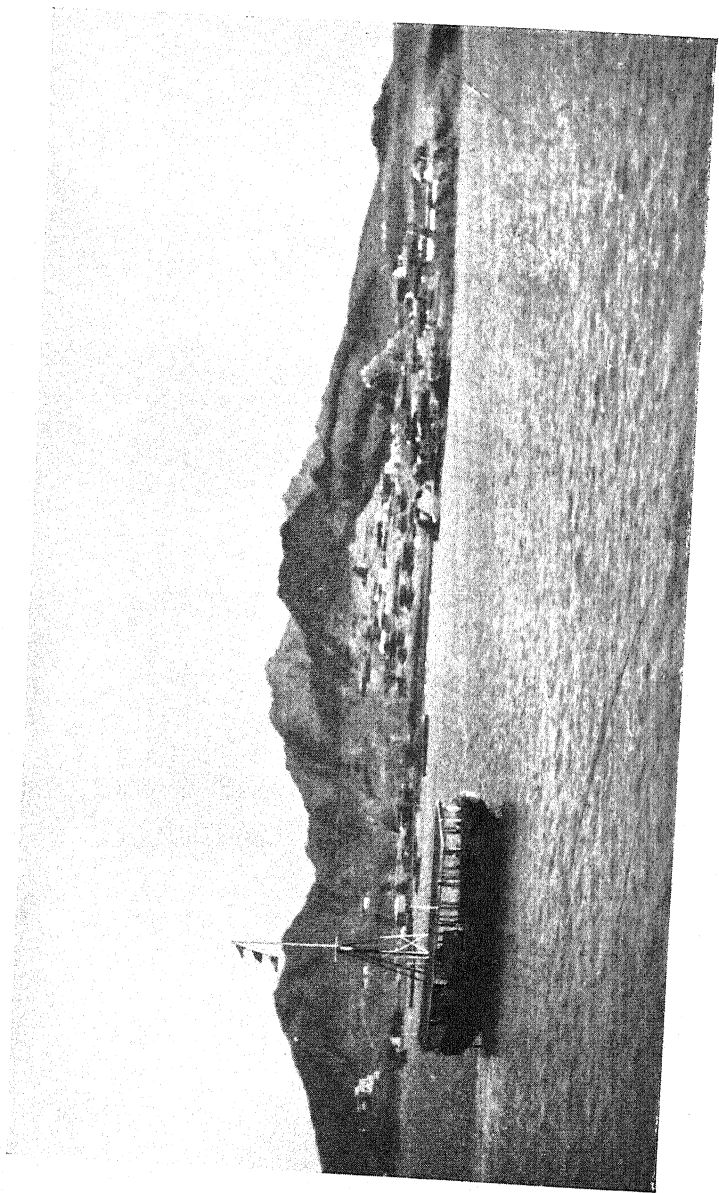
*"Ah, God, if in Thy mercy I might die !
Here, here and now,
On th' mountain's brow,
And feel my mother's arms !" So did I cry.*

*Night fell : remembered faces from the bars
Of heaven did shine.
My soul, like wine,
Poured itself out in radiance to the stars.*

* * * *

On a morning of sunshine and splendour we passed through the Strait between Perim and the mainland, and headed for Aden. When the sun was high we reached Aden harbour.





ADEN.

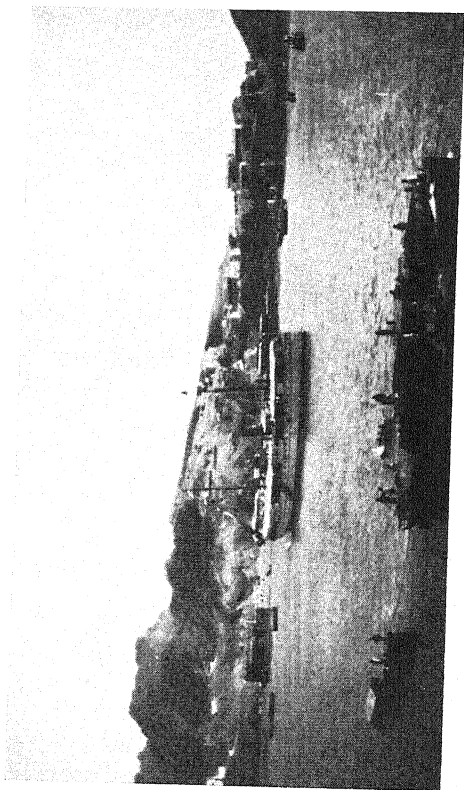
Aden: a handful of red-tiled houses shut in an amphitheatre of copper-coloured rocks. There is something at once cheerful and sad about Aden. Cheerful: for the town, or that part of it visible from the sea, has a theatrically pretty air looked at from the harbour, the houses scattered here and there over the rocks, white walls flashing in the sunlight. Sad: for there is the same aspect of desolation here as one noticed further back on the Arabian shore; no verdure; no blade of grass, or palm tree, or anything for shade or rest to the eye. One pathetic spot of green showed on the sea-front, I suppose where attempts are made to grow shrubs of some kind. Surely to settle on this God-forsaken corner of the earth, where Nature, the inhospitable, warns off man by every means in her power—to settle there and found a community of civilised men and women, is an Achievement: connoting perseverance, vigour, sacrifice. And I, who am essentially unpatriotic by nature—that is to say, who, cherishing my own country as my own home a little closelier than others, yet believe that my own country has no monopoly of virtue

or power or goodness, but that other countries are not inferior in respect of these qualities, and that there is no valid reason why, for example, Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Germans should not regard themselves as brothers of the one family of civilised mankind—I nevertheless hold that in such an achievement Britons may (if they don't do it offensively) legitimately take some pride.

There were signs of life at Aden. In the harbour lay men-of-war, English and Italian. From this point and that steam-launches darted out, manned chiefly by ebony-skinned natives, and officered by white-suited Englishmen in sun-helmets. Here are barges with the mails, barges with fresh water; here is a boat-load of pale-faced, topee-wearing English youths: subalterns, telegraphists, civil servants. The arrival of the mail steamer is an event at Aden. A boat touches the ship, and springing up the ladder comes a fresh-looking naval officer, in cool white clothes, spick and span.

It was at this moment that I made a certain generalisation about Englishmen.

“Englishmen,” I murmured, regarding the



Aden.



spick-and-span naval officer, "Englishmen may be divided roughly into two classes:

"I.—Men who go up to the City by the 9 and come back by the 5.30; and

"II.—Outpost-of-Empire men."

"Why not say," remarked J——, to whom I had spoken, "why not say, Cockneys, and others?"

"Your classification has some reason in it," I replied, pondering. But I held to my own, nevertheless.

As we left Aden, the sun set behind us. And then a fine thing happened. The crater and all the rocky hills behind Aden had been, as I imagined, copper-coloured in the light of noon. When I looked now they were golden in the evening sunlight. A moment later the gold had changed to greenish-grey. Still later the green and the grey melted again into gold. So the light went changing on these bare rocks, making beautiful what had been ugly in the glare of day, until night fell with suddenness, and extinguished all colour. But the moon shone out over the sea, and over the ship, speeding swiftly, on the last stage of our journey, across the Indian Ocean.

APPENDIX I

THE ROUTE OF ISRAEL

THE traveller from Port Said to Cairo *via* Ismailia passes on the way a railway station and a village known as Tel-el-Kebir. It is a typical enough Egyptian village, with slovenly, flat-roofed houses, planted in the desert sand. The traveller (if he be British) naturally thinks of a certain battle which took place there not so long ago, when the British infantry marched across the desert one night and stormed the stockades of Arabi. But for the enthusiastic Egyptologist the place has other associations. A little to the west of Tel-el-Kebir there is a still smaller village, named Saft-el-Henneh. Twenty years ago, shortly after the time when the British infantryman settled his account with Arabi, M. Naville discovered certain tablets at this village of Saft-el-Henneh. From these tablets he learned that the ancient name of the place was "Kes," or "Kesem." "Kesem," argued the Doctor, was surely "Gesem" or "Gesen," and "Gesen," of course, was Septuagint Greek for "Goshen." And thus, by what at first sight the layman would

consider a process of—well, guesswork, he established, conclusively, as scholars say, the site of that land of Goshen where Israel dwelt in Egypt. If this were the only evidence the layman's scepticism would be justified. But it is not the only evidence. Long before the discovery of "Kes," scholars were practically agreed that the land of Goshen was somewhere in the vicinity of Tel-el-Kebir: along that fertile valley known as the Wadi Tumilat. "Kes" was only a corroboration, a brilliant corroboration, of the established theory.

There is another station, as everybody knows, on the Port Said-Cairo line called Zagazig. If you draw a line from Tel-el-Kebir west to Zagazig, you have the base of a triangle the apex of which we may put at Bilbeis, a village south of the two former places. This triangle encloses roughly the land of Goshen. Here the Israelites were encamped before the exodus. In those days Goshen was a richer country than it is now. "The land of Egypt is before thee," said Pharaoh to Joseph: "in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell: in the land of Goshen let them dwell." And Joseph (displaying even in these early times the characteristics of his race) did so. It was a fertile country where the Israelites pastured their flocks and herds, "and grew and multiplied exceedingly." It is in part a fertile country now, where the water is. The sandy

soil teems with life, and only needs water to bring that life to birth.

The Hebrews dwelt in Goshen: but from what point did they start on their long journey to Canaan? Nobody knows. They journeyed, says the record, "from Rameses to Succoth." Rameses has not yet been identified. Succoth, says M. Naville, is "Thukut," where was the town of Pithom—"the abode of Tum," a few miles west of Ismailia. Let us say, therefore, that on the night of the "great cry," the Israelites moved from somewhere in the vicinity of Tel-el-Kebir to somewhere in the vicinity of Ismailia. They were marching east towards what we now call Lake Timsah; and their object was very probably to strike the great route known as "the way of the Philistines," which led along the shore of the Mediterranean to Canaan. But that route was changed. "God led the people about through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea." This was an alternative southerly route to Canaan. On the second day they marched from Succoth to Etham (Khetem), "on the edge of the wilderness." This, no doubt, was a march north to clear them of the sea. It should be said that the sea, in all probability, came much further north than it does now: at least as far as the modern Lake Timsah.

Then follows a mysterious movement. The Lord gave directions to the Children of Israel

“that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea over against Baal-Zephon: before it ye shall encamp by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the Children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in.” Apparently, therefore, the Israelites must have turned southwards again (Pi-hahiroth and Migdol are both unidentified), to a point near Pithom from which they had started on the second day’s march, and so deliberately hemmed themselves in between “the devil and the deep sea.” The Egyptians had only to make a flanking movement north to cut them off entirely from escape. And this they did. Just as to where the Israelites were hemmed in one cannot tell. But “all data,” says one writer, “warrant the site of crossing the ‘Sea of Reeds,’ as within a comparatively short distance of Pithom. . . . In this neighbourhood, between Lake Timsah and the Bitter Lakes, we must look for the scene of the crossing.”¹

¹ It should be said that Dr Sayce, a distinguished authority, dissents from this conclusion. He bases his objections (1) on the fact that the “Sea of Reeds” was not “the sea” crossed by Israel, and (2) that there was a canal partly on the site of the Suez Canal so far back as the reign of Seti I., and that therefore the Gulf of Suez could not have extended north to the Bitter Lakes. But Dr Sayce has no alternative theory to offer us. No doubt the question will never be satisfactorily settled. It should be added that local tradition puts the scene of the crossing at a point seventeen miles down the Gulf.

We may look at it now from the deck of a P. & O. liner; for (if this reasoning be correct) the canal of M. de Lesseps cuts across the path of the Children of Israel where they "went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground."

CHAPTER V

ADEN TO BOMBAY

FROM Aden to Bombay one has at least plenty of time to think. There is indeed nothing else to do between meals. It is too warm to play (though I know that many of my fellow-passengers did not find it so, and played most vigorously at deck quoits, and "bull," and goodness knows what else); too warm to read (you sleep even over the fascinating books borrowed from the ship's library); there is nothing, I repeat, to do but think and sleep. Looking out over the waters of the Indian Ocean becomes monotonous after a time. No land is to be seen (since Arabia faded away into the north), and few ships. There are the flying fish, of course: tiny little sparrow-like creatures with a short, hovering flight; and there are the dolphins, steeple-chasing merrily and madly over the waves. But here is the

picture: a sun, a cloudless sky, a calm, oily sea, a ship; and "the time," as Goethe said, "is endlessly long." So you think; you imagine; you lie in your deck chair and dream dreams. And I dream of many things: of home; of friendship—the rarity of it; of the journey; of the many places I have already seen which had been familiar to me as geographical expressions since childhood; of the difference that seeing a place makes in your interest concerning it; of the, as yet, mysterious East; of the obvious and blatant West; mostly, perhaps, of East and West, and the curious things which must happen when they mingle. I remember that this train of thought was started by conversation with a passenger on the *Marperbia*, who, it seemed to me, summed up in himself in a marvellous manner the results of the grafting of Western education on an Eastern stock. It does not matter where he came from, or what was his name. He was Oriental; well born, even a Prince; let his Eastern qualities just now rest at that. In England he had been a 'Varsity man; like myself, a Templar; a person esteemed in

London society; a sportsman; had, indeed, followed the same routine of pleasure and work and play as that of the ordinary young educated Englishman. And the result? I can only indicate it by recording certain conversations held with him at the dinner-table, amidst the talk and laughter of the crowded saloon, and the whirring of fans, and under the soft, shaded electric lights.

PRINCE.—“Your religions in England confuse me. May I ask what particular denomination——?”

AUTHOR.—“Oh, I? Well, I am of the religion of all wise——”

PRINCE (*smiling*).—“You have joined the Wise Men? Good!”

AUTHOR.—“You knew it, then—D’Israeli’s epigram?”

PRINCE. — “Shaftesbury’s, not D’Israeli’s: but no matter. Mark you, wise men, though they don’t tell, nevertheless have a religion. They must.”

AUTHOR.—“Agreed. You have asked me about mine——”

PRINCE (*quickly*).—“And you are curious about mine? Naturally. Why shouldn’t I tell

it? Between Wise Men there is no reticence on the subject: a 'free play of mind.' Well, I have read all your writers: your Darwins, and Spencers, and Haeckels. In vain. You get back—back—back to the Unknowable."

AUTHOR.—"The Unknowable!"

PRINCE (*sadly*).—"We worship the Unknown God and the Unknowable. He cannot be known. That is the tragedy of our time. He cannot be known, and we know that He cannot be known."

AUTHOR.—"In the West? In the East they think they know Him."

PRINCE (*shrugging his shoulders*).—"Whom ignorantly they worship.' Still they do worship. It must be so now, and for long to come."

[*The talk falls on our social system.*]

PRINCE.—"I dare to avow it: I am a Socialist."

AUTHOR.—"If men were what they ought to be, I too should be a Socialist. But they are not. Under a system of Socialism, all the meanness and tyranny and want of charity of average mankind would have full scope. Socialism is bureaucracy. I dislike bureau-

cracy, especially the kind of bureaucracy we should have in the present development of the human animal."

PRINCE.—"It is a question, as always, of balance of good and evil. Would the evils under Socialism be greater than the evils, the different evils, under Individualism? I doubt it. A system that makes six men or sixty work for the benefit of one: that is Individualism. I prefer a system where the six or the sixty work for their own benefit. That is both just and logical."

AUTHOR.—"Logical!"

PRINCE (*hurriedly*).—"Oh, I know. In England you pride yourselves on your want of logic."

AUTHOR. — "May I ask if you are — a practical Socialist?"

PRINCE (*coolly*).—"No. I don't divide up my possessions. On the contrary, I am in practice a reckless Individualist. I believe in making Individualism as bad as possible. Perhaps that will bring Socialism the sooner."

AUTHOR.—"Ahem!"

[*Literature comes in with the ices.*]

PRINCE.—"Have you read Gibbon?"

AUTHOR (*who always seems to himself to have read everything except what the other fellow has read*). — “I have not read Gibbon.”

PRINCE.—“Read him; not only for the history, but for the Grand Style.”

AUTHOR.—“You esteem him a master in that style?”

PRINCE.—“I do. Mind, the Grand Style died out in England at the close of the seventeenth century. Milton, Hooker, Jeremy Taylor; these are some of your Grand Stylists. But Gibbon revived it. Johnson, too, in places. Scott ought to have been of the company of Grand Stylists, but wasn't. He had the right type of mind, but he cared too little for literature.”

AUTHOR.—“Ruskin——?”

PRINCE.—“No; Ruskin was too febrile and self-conscious. He was, in his great books, a rhetorical stylist.”

GIRL'S VOICE (*across the table*). — “How frightfully serious you gentlemen are! Have you seen the latest at the Gaiety? No? It's simply sweet. Mr Tree as Caliban? Gracious, no. Fancy spending a whole evening listening

to dry Shakespeare stuff when you can see Edmund Payne or Huntley Wright! I like to be *amused* at the theatre."

PRINCE (*laughing*).—"Isn't she a typical girl?"

[*The company disperses to the upper deck.*]

Later I discovered something of the Indian side of the Prince. This scholar and *littérateur*, this student of Gibbon and Spencer and Darwin, wields in the East a sway more than temporal over thousands of brown-skinned Orientals. These men, in their ancient Eastern manner, yield a profound homage to the modern Agnostic. A more extraordinary example of the clashing of East and West, the old world and the new, it would be difficult to conceive. Does he accept the position with complacency? I do not know, and it is not my business to enquire. But surely sometimes the contrast between things as they really are and things as they seem to be, the enormous incongruity of his position, must strike him: must give him cause for furious thought. Whether that be so or not, I suggest that there are here materials for an excellent sensational story, which might open with a

scene at the "Savoy" or the "Cecil," where the hero (the Prince) enchants a dinner party with his brilliant talk; and might then transport us to the East, where the Prince could be shown in barbaric splendour, receiving the adoration of the faithful. I commend the idea to you, A (that last novel of yours was a little, just a little, flat); to you, B, builder of sensational plots; to you, C, whose stories (sixpenny edition) have mitigated for me the tedium of many a railway journey. I present you with the murex, dear Hobbs and Nobbs, and you may hint and print blue as much as you like.

.

Last night there was a fancy dress ball on the *Marperbia's* promenade deck. The night was hot; the moon shone over an oily sea. But the piano played merrily, the dancers danced, the knights and ladies—lampshades, sea-maidens, peasant girls, and the rest—kept up the fun till "Lights out" sounded at eleven. Never mind whether Mr Author danced or not. Never mind whether he went to the ship's barber (friend of all men travellers) and suggested a gallant Knight's Templar costume :

never mind whether the barber scratched his head, and said: "No, but I could make you a fool, sir, in ten minutes. O' course, sir, you'd 'ave to 'ave your face floured, and a touch of red put on your lips. Werry nice costume, sir, a Pierrot's;" never mind whether Mr Author (with a shudder, as he thought of Pump Court) declined to be made a fool of. It does not matter. Suffice it to say that he enjoyed himself. Suffice it to say that he admired the dainty costumes of the women, and made a number of satirical remarks about the costumes of the men. Suffice it to say that when he hears the strains of a certain waltz he remembers that night on the Indian Ocean: a deck festooned with flags; the shuffling of dancers' feet; bright eyes and laughter, and gay young hearts; moonlight and music:

"Arcadia, night, a cloud, Pan, and the moon."

"Anything else, Mr Author?" Well that, madame, is surely my own business.

This morning I woke at half-past five. I sat up in bed and rubbed my eyes sleepily. Something was happening, for there was no

throb of engines. The ship had stopped. Just opposite to my drowsy eyes was a disc of rose-colour. Across this disc wiggled and waggled a thin black line. From above a voice came at intervals a hoarse voice—an English voice, shouting unintelligible things. From somewhere else came other voices, still more unintelligible, because not English. What did it all mean? Comprehension came by degrees. The disc of rose-colour was the “awful rose of dawn”—an Indian dawn—showing through the port-hole; the thin black line was the line attached to the lead, which a British tar was heaving from his eyrie just above my cabin; the hoarse English voice was the British tar’s, crying the depth; the other voices were the voices of innumerable natives—conversational amenities, I supposed, between the Lascars on board ship and early visitors from the shore. Presently, with a rattle and a roar the anchor dropped, and I knew that we had reached Bombay.

APPENDIX II

ADEN

ADEN is said to have been the place where Cain died. Cain, of course, died in the Land of Nod; and obviously the Land of Nod is a not unapt description of Aden. The town is also said to have been built by, or at least called after, Ad, the son of Aws, the great-grandson of Noah; "but this," as an Early Victorian writer remarks piously, "must rest chiefly on conjecture." Ad, they tell us, built Aden (you see how easily we get our derivations). It was a great and mighty city in these days. There was a magnificent palace, with cool, delightful gardens. "Where is that city now?" Well, it is "still standing" (so the Arabs say), invisible. But occasionally God permits one of His chosen ones to see it; and then the chosen one comes home and romances. So they say of a romancer in the Yemen, "He has seen the city of Ad"; or, more shortly, "He is an Ad-er."

Aden, in the Yemen district of Arabia, has always been (since the conjectural days of Ad) a really important place. For a fabulous

number of centuries it was a great *entrepôt* of Oriental commerce: one of the principal clearing-houses in the trade between East and West. The Romans destroyed it in A.D. 50. Many marauders, Arab and other, captured it in turn during the first six hundred years of the Christian Era. Then came the Turk, propagating the true faith of Islam. The inhabitants of Aden seemed to have received the faith in "battalions and platoons." "The tribe of Hamdan," says the chronicler, "were converted in one day." So easy were the religious triumphs of that distant age. Aden prospered. Marco Polo, the ubiquitous one, paid it a visit in 1298, and found it, *inter alia*, "a great market for horses." The discovery of the Cape route to India at the end of the fifteenth century was, of course, a blow to Aden. Much of the commerce of the West thereafter went by the new route to the East. Yet Aden continued to be a prosperous enough place. It also became strategically important when, early in the last century, we began to use the "overland" route to India—*i.e.*, *viâ* Alexandria, Suez, and the Red Sea. Obviously it was a place which might be of use to England, if only an opportunity of annexation would present itself: an opportunity, of course, backed by a convincing moral justification. Such an opportunity came, as it always does.

In 1836 the good ship *Deriah Dowlat*, sailing from Calcutta to Jeddah, manned by an Indian crew, and flying the British flag, was wrecked close to Aden. Let us not ask how and why she was wrecked. There is talk of a dishonest supercargo, with an eye on his share of the profits. The *Deriah Dowlat* was wrecked: its crew (including some Indian women) were maltreated; the cargo was seized by the local Sultan. After some time the Government of India sent a certain Captain Haynes to seek redress. The negotiations were protracted, even beyond the common limit of Oriental negotiations. The Sultan, it appeared, was willing to pay compensation; but he could not quite see eye to eye with Captain Haynes as to the necessity of ceding Aden to the British Government. At length two warships from Bombay came to assist him to make up his mind. Finally, the town was stormed and captured by the British with a loss of sixteen killed and wounded. Peace was signed in 1843, since when we have held Aden, not without alarms from predatory Arabs. "From Abdullah, from the Slave of God" (wrote Syed Ishmael to Captain Haynes in the 'forties), "the Upholder of the Law, named Syed Ishmael, etc., etc., the Pardoned of God, to the great Commander of the Feringhies: Peace be to those who go in the Right Path, who fear wickedness and succumb to the Almighty!

If you agree to listen to my advice, and submit yourselves humbly to me, you will be doubly blessed by God at once, and you and I at once become of the same creed, having been so long of different persuasions" (is not this delightful?): "what is mine will become yours, and what is yours mine." Captain Haynes having rejected this tempting offer, Syed Ishmael made his attack on Aden, which failed. It was not the first or the last abortive Arab attack on Aden.

Life at Aden has doubtless not changed very much since the 'forties, when "an officer in the Queen's Army" wrote that "one very great drawback . . . is the almost total want of ladies' society—a circumstance indeed that may well be lamented. . . . (It is) a land where you are neither overwhelmed with sorrow, nor altogether deserted by pleasure. A little philosophy may reconcile one to the former; the latter is welcome when it comes, yet, Heaven defend me from ever selecting such a station to reside in from choice! . . . Ye disciples of Epicurus, go not there; gaiety, beauty, luxury and revelry never hope to find! Avoid it, ye sons of Genius—the soaring eagle cannot love the confinement of a cage."

There is probably no great competition among the sons of Genius for the honour of a post at Aden.

CHAPTER VI

URBS PRIMA IN INDIS

MISS P—— (now, of course, Mrs N——), a lady in whose judgment I reposed some confidence, declared, as we stood together on the deck of the *Marperbia*—ah yes! for the last time—and looked out over the harbour and city of Bombay, that in her opinion it was “quite the most beautiful scene in the world.”

“How can you possibly say that,” I retorted mildly, “until you have visited all the other beautiful scenes?”

Miss P—— turned and regarded me.

“I did not think,” she replied derisively, “that you were a *stupid* man, Mr Author,” implying, as you observe, that she was perfectly cognisant of my many other deficiencies.

I did not argue with Miss P——, because, in fact, I agreed with the opinion she thought she had expressed. The scene before us was certainly most beautiful. Try and imagine

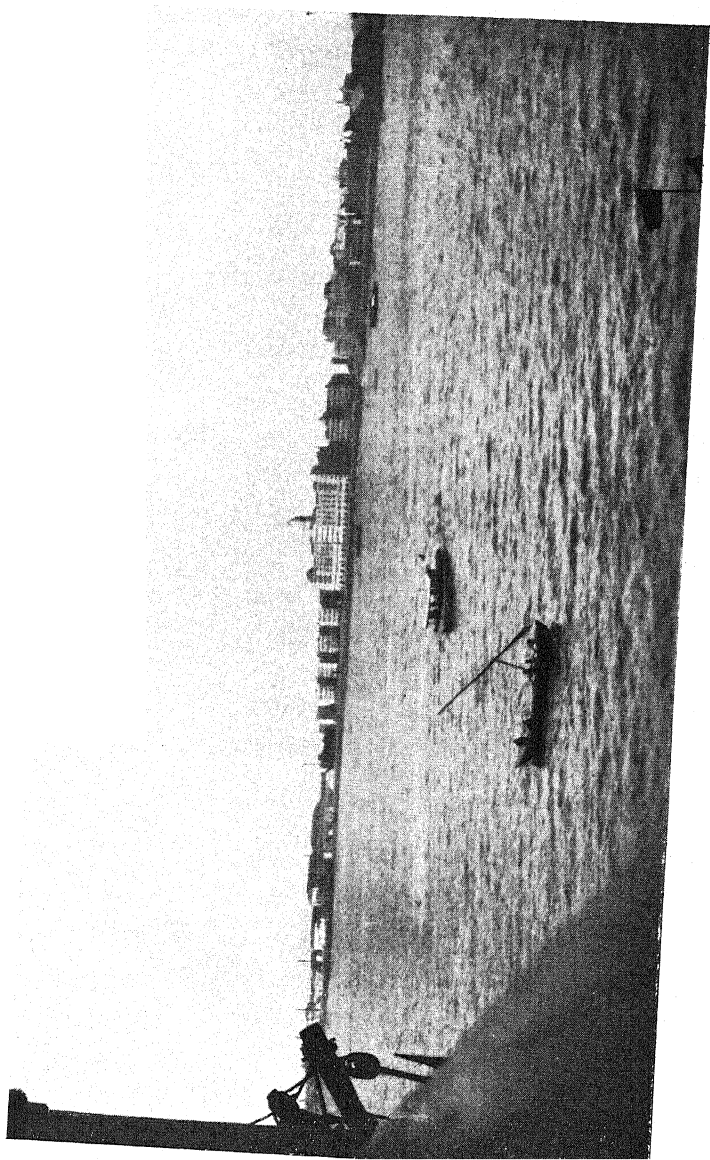
it: Bombay city like a "stretched forefinger" in the sea; a long, low line of red-roofed houses, white spires, domes, towers—

"All clear and glittering in the smokeless air"—

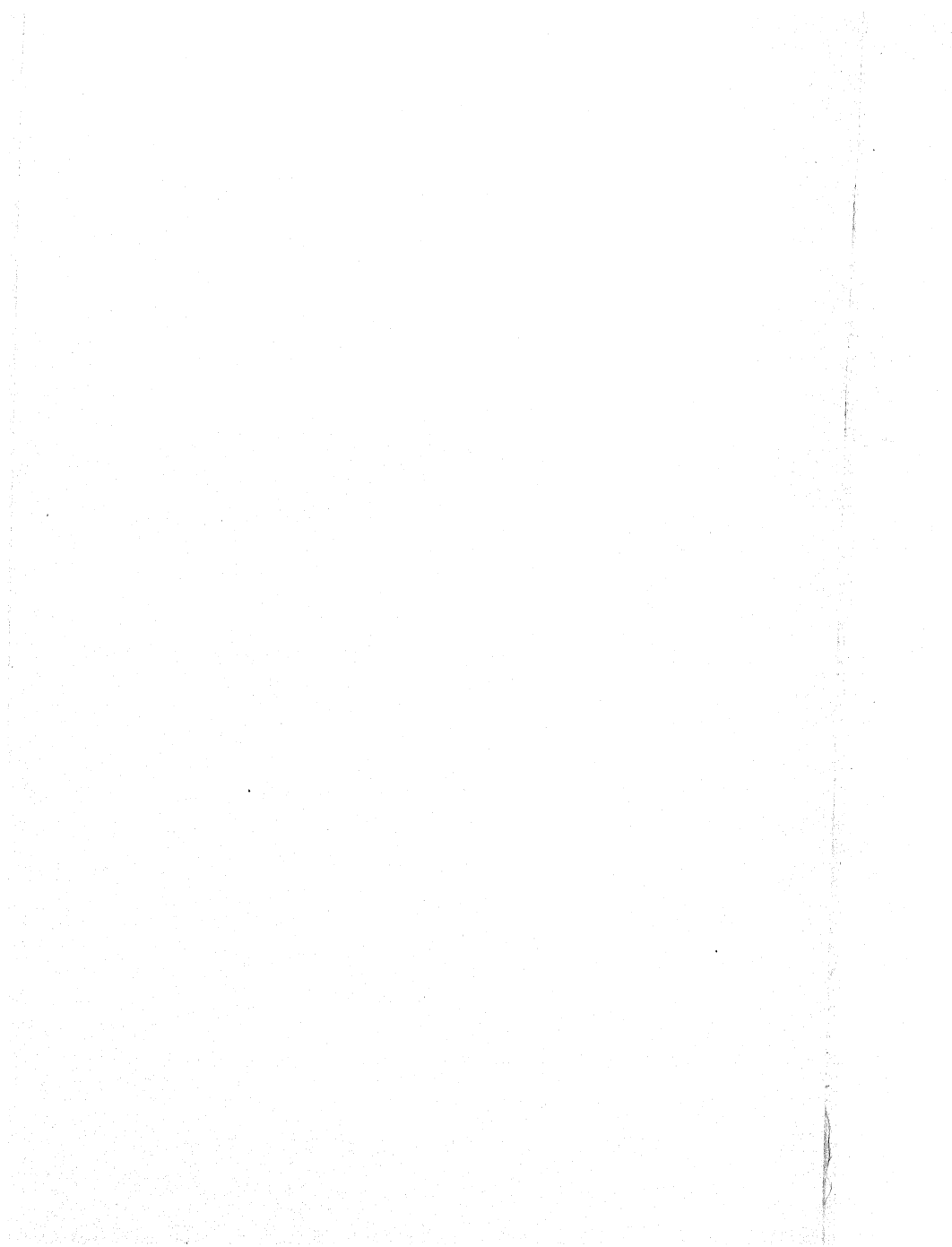
and this pageantry washed by blue water, and crowned by blue sky. About us was the magnificent harbour, dotted with isles, encircled by hills. And the sparkle, the brightness of it all. From a hundred white points the sun flashed in splendour. The dun sails of countless fishing craft in the harbour reddened in the morning light. For a few brief moments one felt the force of the "pathetic fallacy": Nature sympathising with man; showing him all her beauty; saying to him: "See, how fair I am. Be happy in my loveliness. . . ."

I suppose I must have expressed some such sentiment as this to Miss P——, for I remember that she said Yes; that it was very beautiful, but that it did not seem to make her at least any happier. I gently enquired why. She murmured of the unknown future.

"It is all very well for you," she said, and there was a suspicion of tears in the voice,



BOMBAY FROM THE SEA.



"you are only on a holiday trip. In a few weeks you will be sailing back to dear old England. While I—well, India is my future home. I don't know anything about it. And so I suppose I fear it. Anyhow, you needn't expect me to be gay this morning, for I'm not, and won't be."

"But you are going to be married, aren't you?" I queried.

Miss P—— gave a little stamp of her foot.

"Oh yes, I am going to be married," she said. "Of course; but there: you men never will understand. Let's go down to breakfast."

After breakfast we prepared to land. I think we were sorry, most of us, to leave the *Marperbia*. She was a gallant ship; it had been a voyage of sunshine and calm weather; we had all of us made friends, some of us permanent friends, others (more difficult), temporary. But it is time to say good-bye. A tender slips alongside. We step carefully in, screening our heads from the sun with umbrellas and parasols (for as yet we had no topees). Good-bye, *Marperbia*! The tender skims fussily towards the shore. I begin to make my farewell to the few friends (permanent

and temporary) of the voyage. There was J——, for example, who said confidently: "I shall see you again, old boy." And when I said, "Where?" he replied: "Oh, at various places." And Miss P——: I thought she looked a little sad: it gratified me; but a few minutes afterwards a bronzed, moustachio'd man greeted her on the pier, and I perceived that she had already forgotten my existence. It is thus that cynics are made.

We landed at the Ballard Pier, still clutching the inviolable shade of our umbrellas.

You will see excellent descriptions of Bombay in various guide-books. Perhaps in a later chapter I may succumb to the temptation to impart information; for, in spite of one's prejudice against people who insist on putting you in the possession of facts, it is true that the desire to tell other people things they do not know is deeply implanted in the human breast, and none of us is absolutely proof against it. But in this chapter I mean only to relate a few things that happened (more or less). If the reader is faintly conscious of Bombay in the background, so much the better.

And the first thing I remember happening was this. On the Ballard Pier stood a large crowd of persons, English and Indian. Several of these persons held garlands of flowers and bouquets in their hands. I wondered what the festival was, and asked Sir F—— if he had any theory on the subject.

“Garlands?” said Sir F——, raising his eyes shorewards. “Flowers? Hum! I have been in India before. Is there any distinguished person on board?”

“Sir F—— is on board,” I answered wickedly. At this moment the gangway was thrown across, and we began to climb to the pier. As soon as we reached it I heard murmurs of “Sir F——; there he is!” I glanced at Sir F——. He in his turn glanced round desperately, as though seeking a way of escape. Too late. In a moment somebody had slipped a garland round his neck, had thrust a bouquet into his hand, and had commenced to read an illuminated address. I heard references to “your long Parliamentary career,” “your unwearied labours in the cause of” something or other. And then I fled. Fleeing, I looked back at Sir F——. His countenance wore an expression

of resigned melancholy, mingled, I imagined, with something triumphal. . . . Well, you soon get used to garlands in India. They meet you at railway stations, at hotels, at functions of all kinds. Always garlands. My rooms in India were frequently decorated with these floral trophies (Sir F——'s, if you please). It is a pretty custom: an extremely pretty and characteristic custom of the Indians. I do not in the least sneer at it. I like it; but it is a little embarrassing to Europeans in the first instance.

And then something else happened. Outside the Customs shed I was greeted respectfully, but warmly, by a native, his dark skin set off by spotless white clothes and turban.

"Sahib," he said, salaaming low (this, too, is pretty).

"Yes?"

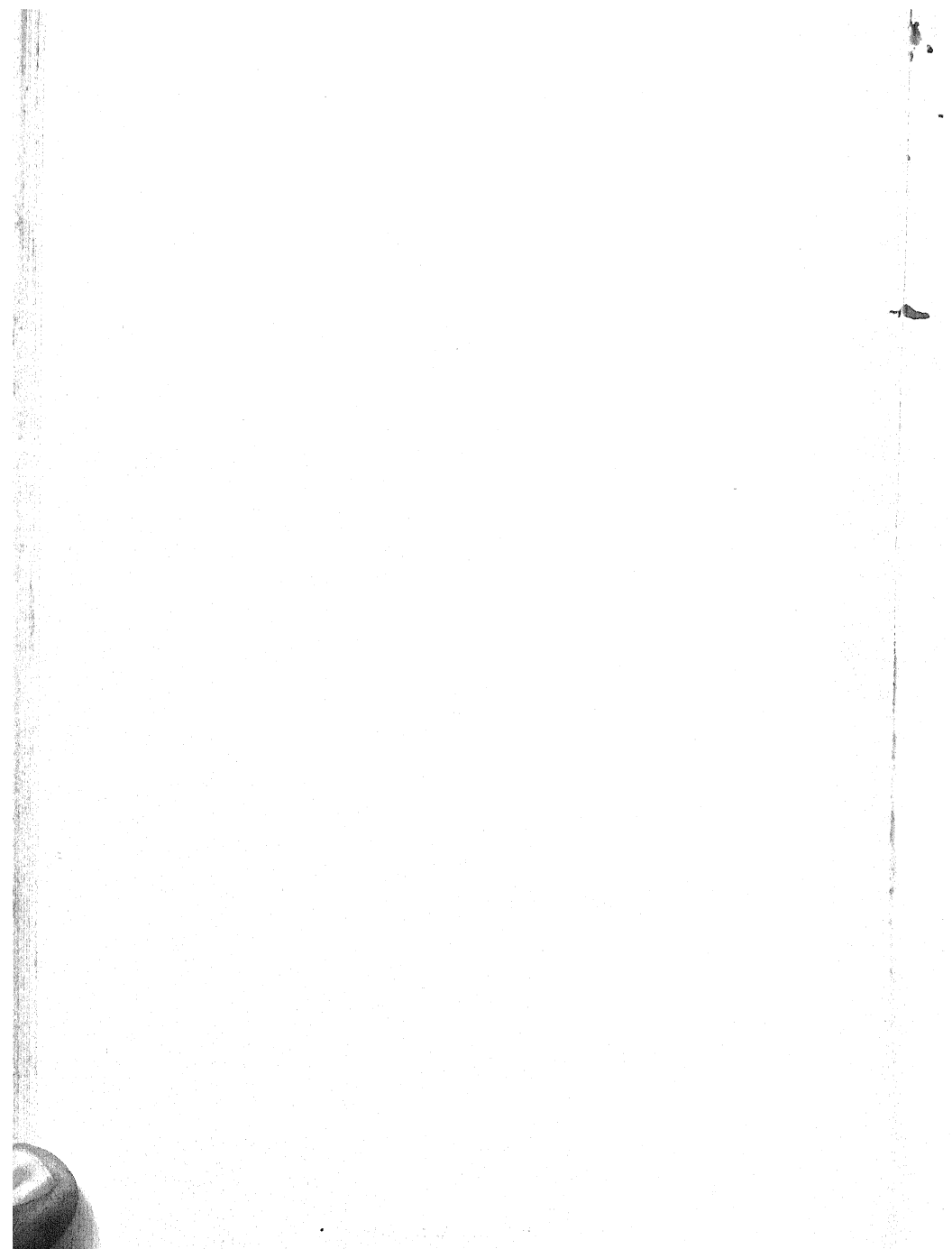
"You want the hotel: the Taj Mahal Hotel. Is it not so?"

"It is so."

"I will take the Sahib there."

Summoning a gari (I called it a "victoria" then) Dark Skin helped me into it. Then he hopped up beside the driver, and we drove off.





I imagined that my brown friend was a servant from the hotel, and I congratulated myself on my good luck in finding him. We drove for a few minutes in silence. Then :

DARK SKIN.—“Sahib will want to see the sights?”

SAHIB.—“No : hotel.”

DARK SKIN.—“Me show Sahib the sights; me very good guide.”

SAHIB (*beginning to realise that he had been “done”*).—“No. I don’t want the sights: I want the hotel.”

DARK SKIN.—“Very good, Sahib, all right. But me *very* good guide.”

So we drove to the hotel. We drove through wide handsome streets, fringed by thick banyan trees. I noticed graceful buildings, statues, fountains. I noticed, too, in the streets countless turbaned figures walking quickly and with springy footsteps in all directions, as if on business that could not possibly wait. I vaguely wondered if life in the East was so strenuous as that. The sun was hot. The streets and houses were a glare of white light. So we came to the hotel.

At the hotel Dark Skin refused to be shaken off. He had taken possession of my luggage and of me. He gave peremptory orders to the hotel coolies concerning my luggage. He accompanied me to my room. By this time I had begun to look upon him as an Old Man of the Sea. He unpacked my bag, and put out my hair-brushes and razors. He enquired anxiously if I wanted hot water. He was, indeed, very attentive; but still I summoned up sufficient resolution to inform him that I should now dispense with his services. I gave him generous backsheesh, for I liked the fellow. He went out of the room softly.

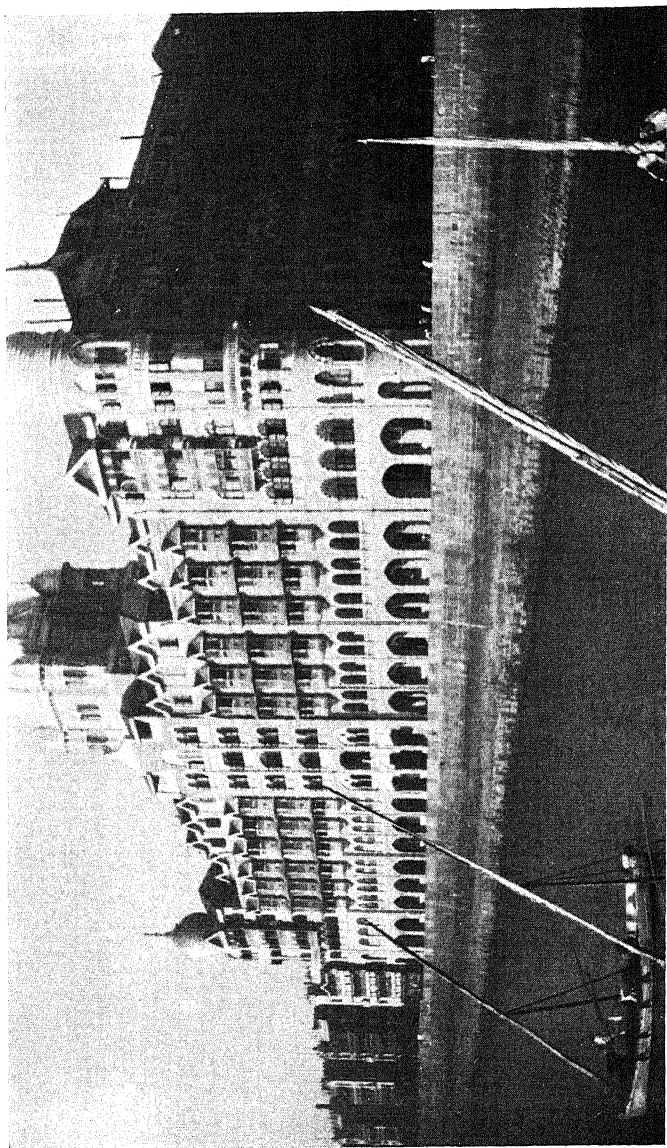
Ten minutes afterwards I opened my door and found Dark Skin squatting on the mat. I spoke to him sternly.

"Sahib!" he murmured, rising with a salaam, "Sahib!"

"I do not require a servant."

"I am a poor man, Sahib," he said. "My father is dead; my mother is dead. I would bring you tea in the morning—brush your clothes—clean your shoes——"

"I do not require a servant."



THE TAJ MAHAL HOTEL, BOMBAY.



“Sahib!”

His dark eyes rolled mournfully. There was indeed something inexpressibly sad about this man's face. I observed the same thing subsequently in many other Indian faces: a depth of sadness, as though a thousand years of oppression had gathered in the eyes of one man. But the fact remained that I did not want a servant. I again emphasised it. I am afraid that I gave poor Dark Skin more backsheesh. He went away.

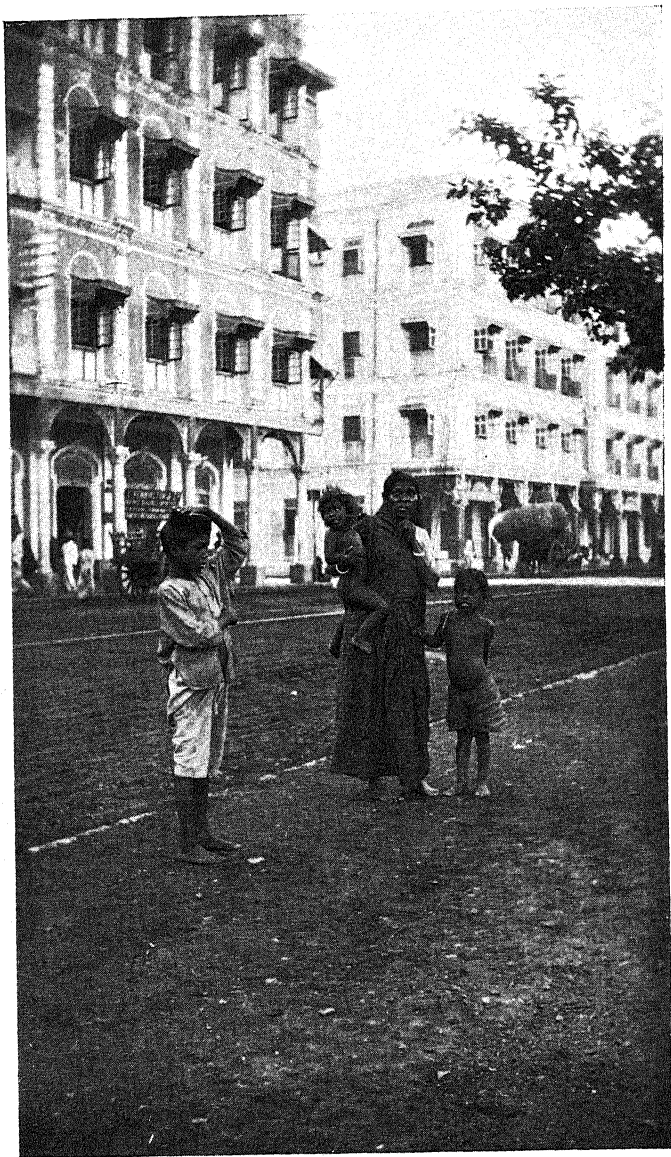
After that—though Bombay was waiting to be explored—I felt hungry, and had a third breakfast. I say I felt hungry, but it would be more accurate to say that I felt in a mild state of collapse. The sensation was as if the screws that hold one together had all been taken out. This was, of course, the effect of the Bombay heat on a newcomer. I looked at a thermometer. It marked 89 degrees in the shade. Well, it is often 89 degrees in the shade on a summer's day in Fleet Street, yet I never felt quite like that in Fleet Street. So I came to the conclusion that Bombay heat was a specially vile kind of heat: a moist, relaxing heat,

searching even to the marrow. My clothes were certainly too heavy for me. Therefore (having breakfasted) I made haste to purchase (within the borders of the hotel) a light drill suit; also a sola topee. Then I went out: out into the sunlight: the terrible sunlight: the sunlight of a Bombay morning sun. (One feels that the new Verbless or Stabbing style is entirely appropriate to an occasion like this.) Pavements of Inferno. Streets ablaze. Light everywhere, pitiless, blinding. And heat — scorching heat, brutal heat . . . My eyes were dazzled. My breath came in short gasps. I hailed a gari, and began to explore Bombay.

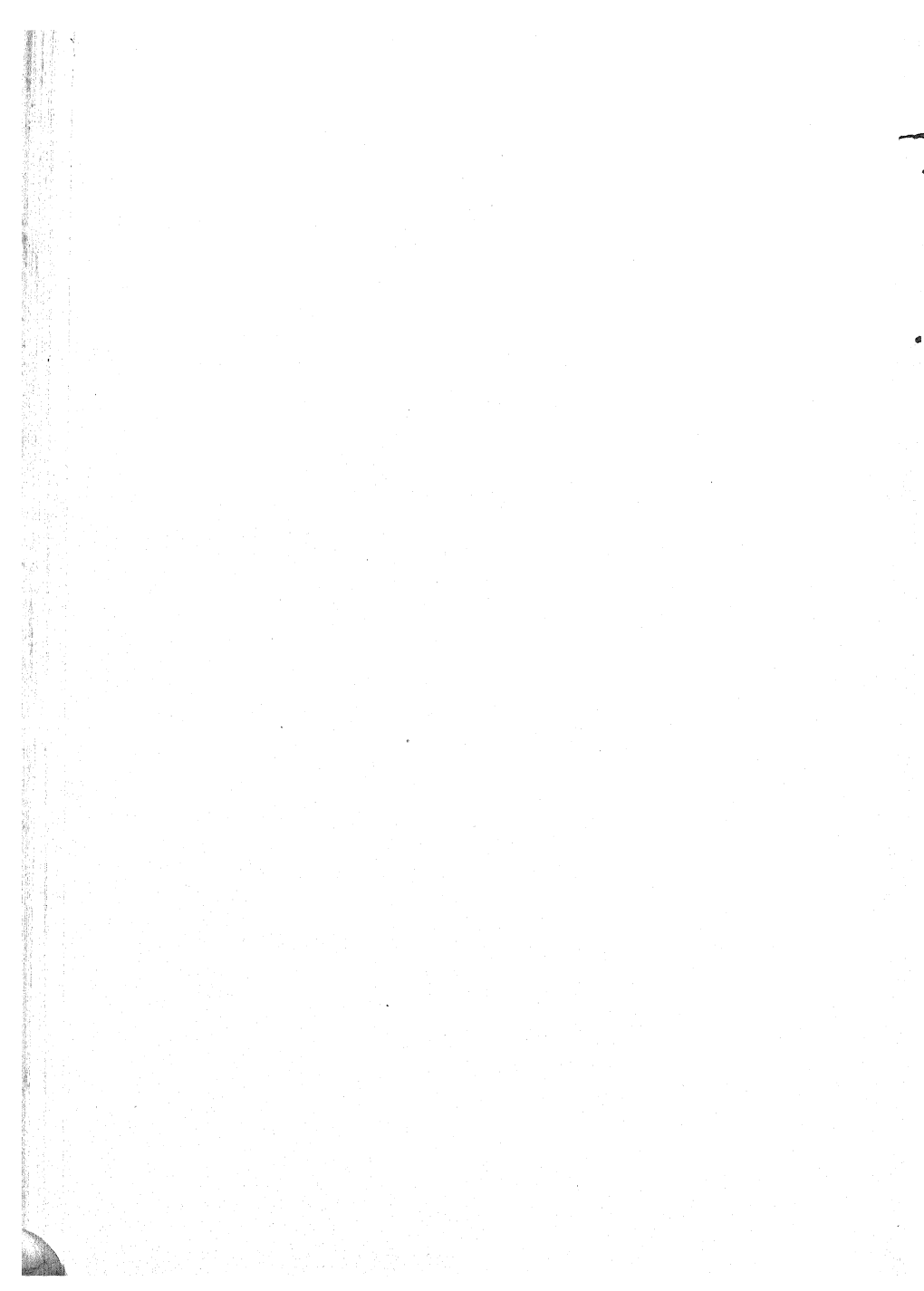
From the hooded shelter of the gari I saw the City Beautiful. Let me collate in Whitmanesque fashion the impressions of that first drive through Bombay.

I admired the broad avenues, bordered by palms and thickly - growing banyan trees.

I admired the handsome public buildings, thinking of many towns in England where it would be considered "dreadful extravagance," "unremunerative



STREET GROUP, BOMBAY.



expenditure," "gross waste of the ratepayers' money" to erect such buildings.

I admired the palm-shaded Queen's Road, sweeping round Back Bay to Malabar Hill.

I admired the villas on Malabar Hill, and the view from the hill.

I admired a great many other things which I cannot remember.

But I do remember that :

I admired the lithe, graceful, perfectly-moulded figures of the low - caste women in the streets ; and thought how superior their carriage was to that of the corseted women of the West. They walked erectly, with so free and springy a step. Even the old crones, with ugly, wrinkled faces, had young, unbent figures. 'Tis said to be the result of "carrying things" on their heads. I wish our women would carry things on their heads.

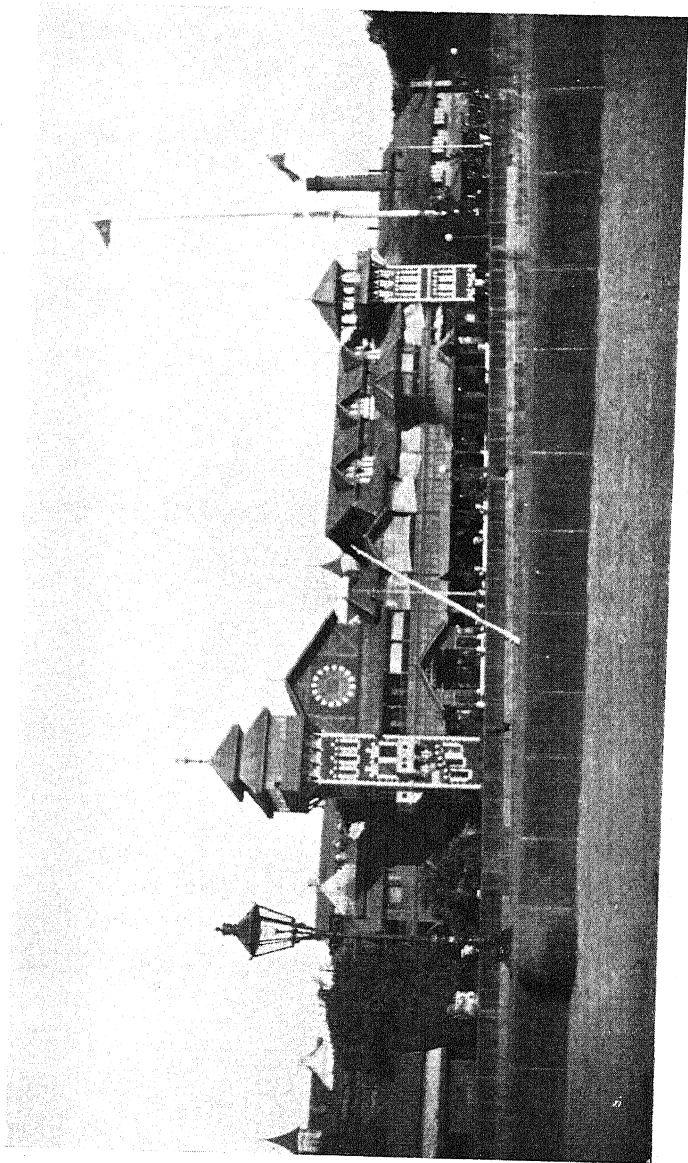
CHAPTER VII

URBS PRIMA IN INDIS—(Continued)

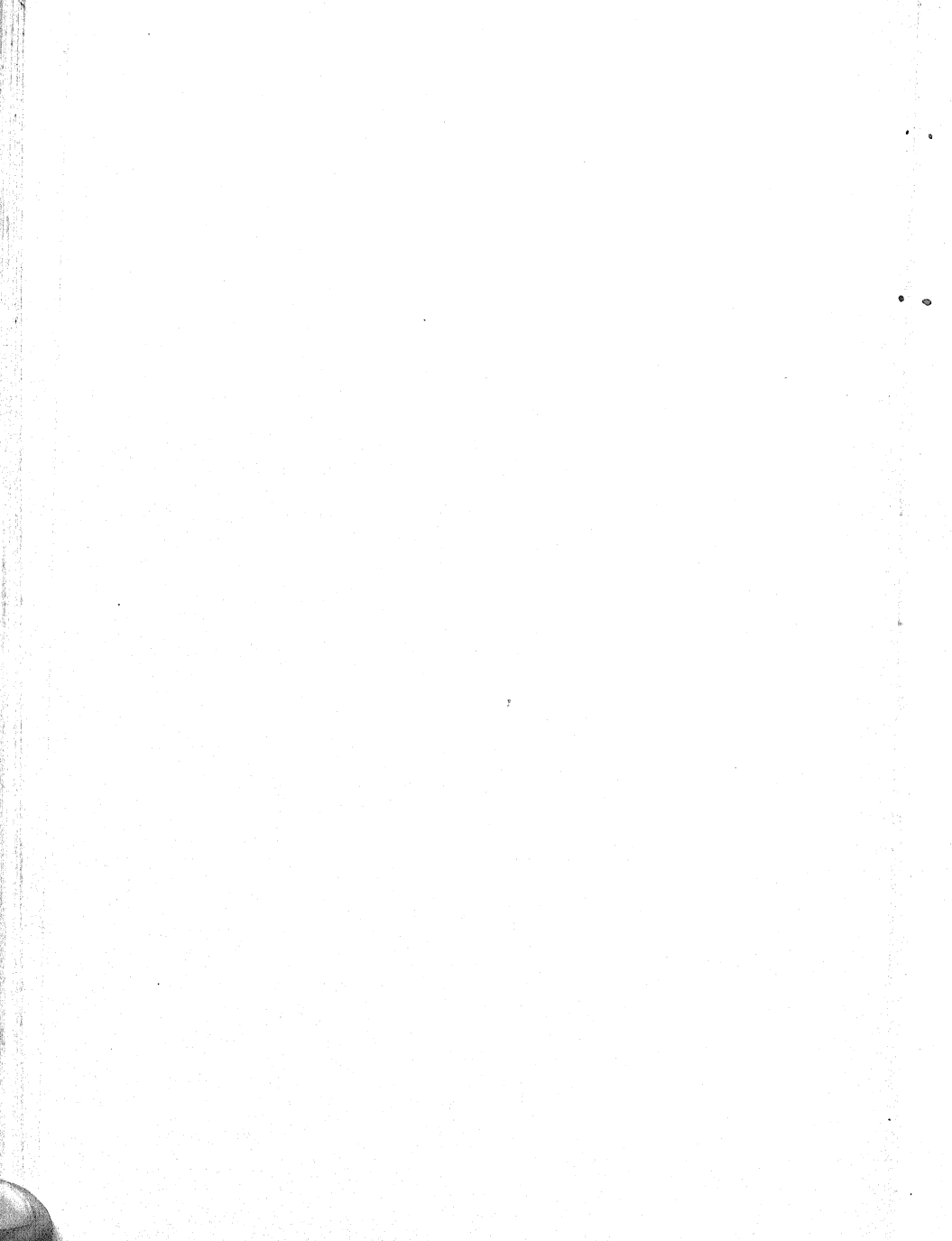
"WE don't hear very much of Bombay at home, do we?" said Sir F—— one evening, as we sat on the terrace of the Taj Mahal Hotel after dinner enjoying the view over the harbour. Strains of music floated up from the Yacht Club close by. On the Apollo Bunder was a stir of turbaned figures.

"We don't," I assented; "at least I have heard so little, that the size and splendour of the city astonishes me. I wonder why this silence?"

"The answer is easy," replied Sir F——; "we don't hear very much of Bombay because we don't hear very much of India. India is dumb. The Colonies, on the other hand, are vocable—some of them extremely so. And if the Colonies themselves keep quiet for a season, there are always interested persons at home to boom them, to display their beauties,



THE YACHT CLUB, BOMBAY.



advantages and resources. It is part of the big game of politics. But India does not count. Her affairs, her policy, internal and external, are settled for her by half a dozen bureaucratic officials. She is taken for granted, this great silent unit of the Empire. Now look at that view!"

The moon was rising behind the hills that encircle the harbour. Innumerable lights twinkled in the city and on the waters about the city. It was a scene almost perfect in its beauty.

"Now if that view were to be found anywhere in the dominions of the Colonial Office," continued Sir F—— "it would be as familiar to us as the view from Richmond Hill. It would creep into the perorations of the Secretary of State. To have seen it would be the essential mark of a patriot. But it is only *urbs prima in Indis*. Well, in spite of this silence and indifference—or because of it?—Bombay has grown to be the finest city in the Empire, next to London. So I think. Be it yours, my friend, to hymn its beauties to the British public."

I modestly disclaimed, and still disclaim,

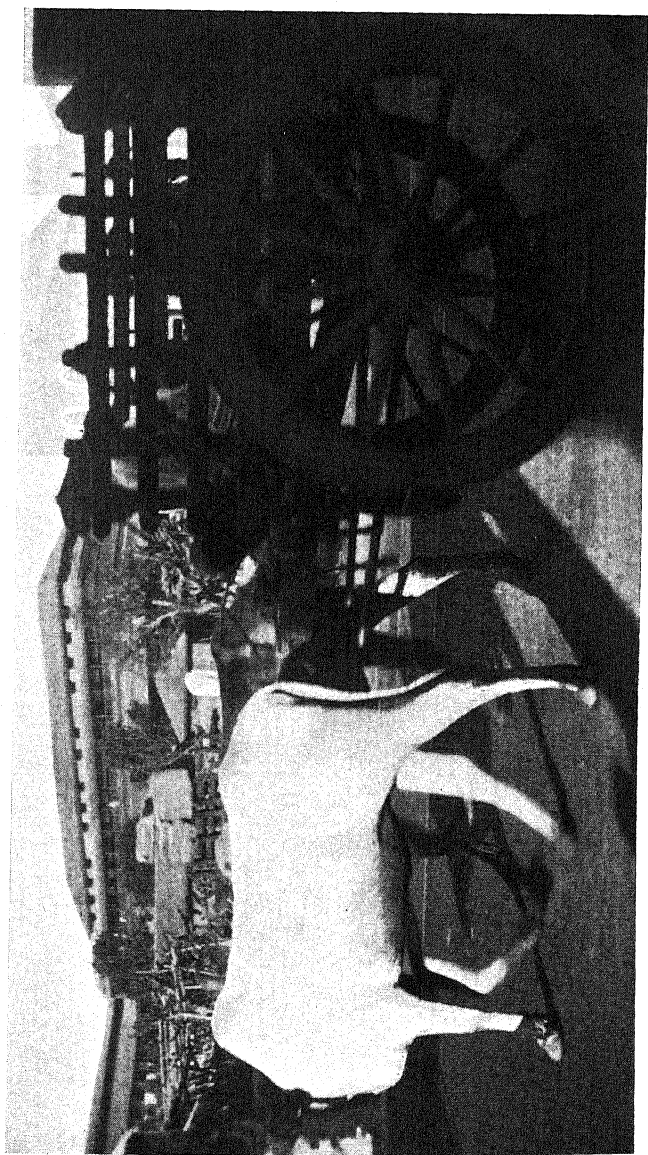
any such ambition or intention. Bombay I know to be a city worthy of the most elaborate description. But here we get back to my pet theory. Having described it at length, having noted its size, population, main buildings, dimensions of main buildings, are you any nearer to its appreciation? I don't think so. I imagine you (living at Brixton) to say: "Yes, but, after all, your talk of houses, streets, trees, people, reminds me a good deal of Clapham." Nevertheless, there are some things worth saying of Bombay.

And first, it is happy in its situation. Once upon a time it was a series of islands. (You will read all about this in the appendix to this chapter; for I have a certain romantic interest in the founders of the Indian Empire, and think some of them worthy of an appendix; not because the Indian Empire is a subject for bragging, but because, in the days when a journey from London to Carlisle was a serious undertaking, these stout fellows made unthinkable journeys to the East, and there performed miracles and marvels.) Now the islands have been joined; land has been reclaimed at various points; and Bombay,

though still an island, has become practically a peninsula jutting out into the waters of the Indian Ocean. An illustration will help one to realise the topography of the place. Crook the forefinger of the left hand slightly, as if about to form with the thumb the letter C. The thumb will then represent Malabar Hill; the space between the thumb and the forefinger Back Bay; the forefinger itself is Bombay proper — the town, the Fort and Colaba; and the space between the first and second fingers will roughly represent the harbour. So the town is well washed by the sea. It should be one of the healthiest cities in the world. It is hardly necessary to say that it is not one of the healthiest cities in the world.

The best view of the city is that from Malabar Hill. Looking down, one sees the place in all its domed and spired beauty; not a huddled wilderness of bricks and mortar, but well interspersed with palms and other tropical foliage (Bombay, unlike some Indian towns, has quite a tropical look); and the curve of Back Bay remains in the memory for its almost perfect line. Yes: we look at

a fair city of the East, but there in the background is a thick pall of smoke, which covers ugly, industrial, Western Bombay. It is a shame to spoil the picture; but there is the smoke, and under the smoke are the cotton mills. And if you go down to yon smoky corner about sunset, you will meet crowds of factory workers streaming out from the mills: you may imagine yourself in Lancashire, but for the dusky faces and flowing cotton garments. Industrial Bombay makes you think furiously. On the one hand, you may say: "Here is the regeneration of India, here the money-making machines which help to solve all political, economic, and social problems. I rejoice at this smoke and grime and at these myriad factory workers: I hail the civilisation of the West in yon hooting syren." On the other hand, you may, remembering Ruskin, say: "A curse upon this gross industrialism of the West: spoiling beauty and spoiling life; how much happier would these poor people be out in the open fields and under the open sky, engaged in idyllic agricultural or other simple manual labour!" And you (the Ruskinian) might go on, and, with reason, to

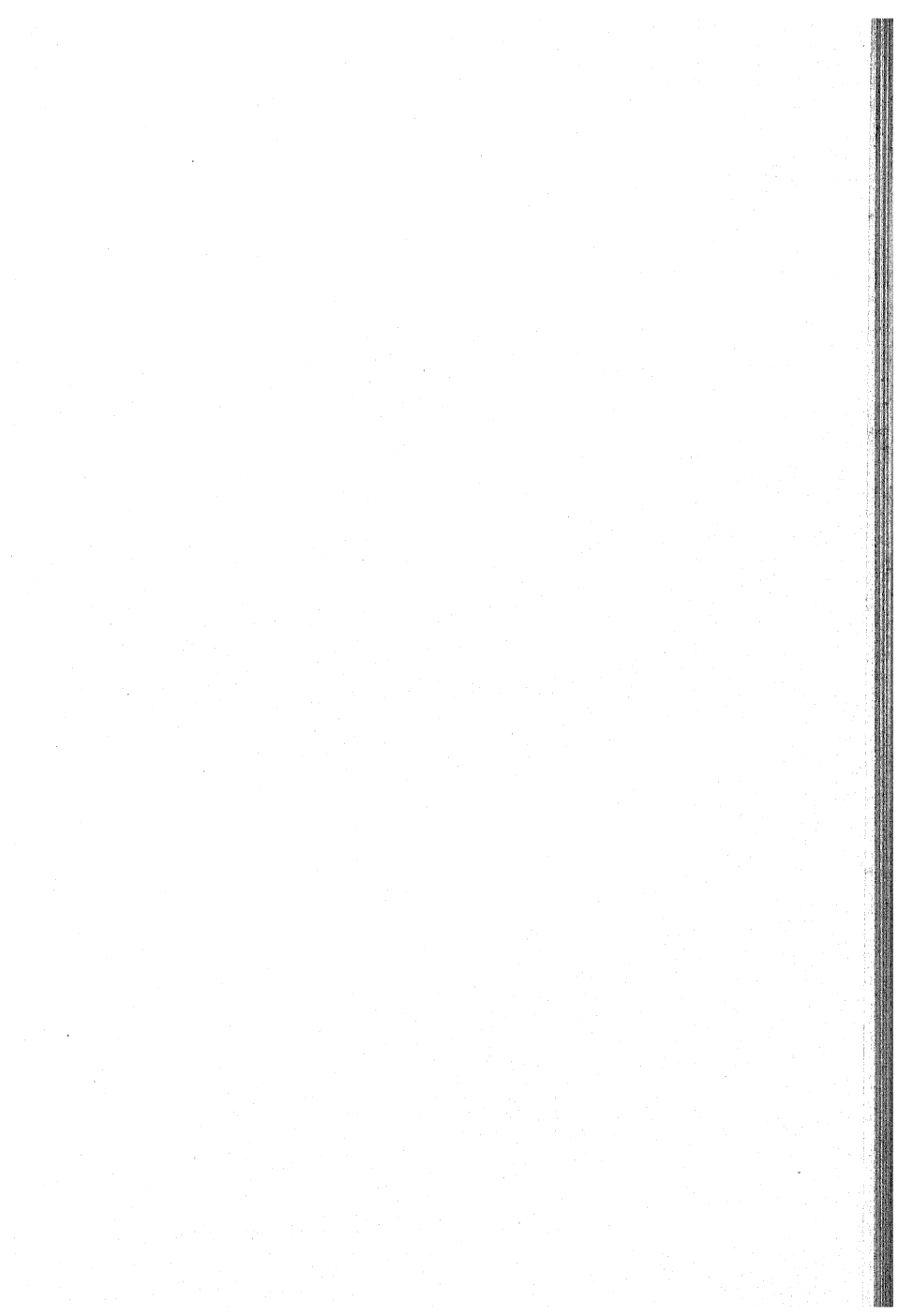


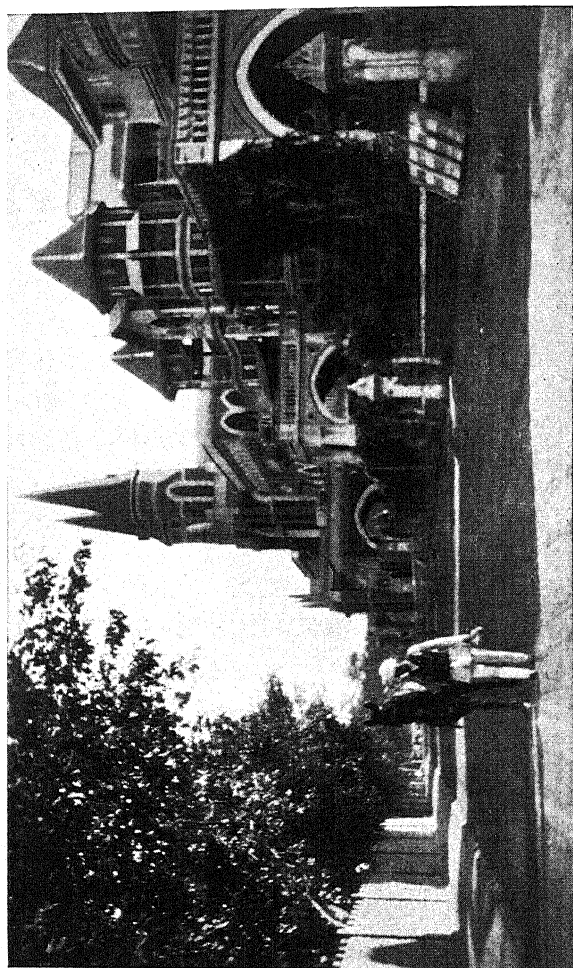
BOMBAY: IN THE COTTON DISTRICT.



inveigh against those misguided people who would turn India into a gigantic Lancashire, killing the simple immemorial life of the peasants, turning them into automata for the making of money. "But doesn't it give employment?" asks the indignant manufacturer from Lancashire. To which I would reply, holding a brief for my Ruskinian friend: "Man wants not employment here below, so much as the results of employment: food, clothing, shelter. Especially is it so in the case of the Indian ryot, whose wants are few, and who despises the myriad 'wants' of the civilised Western. How much better it would be to develop India (if it must be developed) along lines marked out by the genius of India: agriculture, village and cottage industries, and the like. But no: you will not be satisfied till you cover India with filthy, smoking chimneys, and turn her rivers into filthy sewers: and put the profits of the labours of her children into the pockets of cosmopolitan capitalists, and finally (for these poor Indians are lazy, and must be taught the virtue of work!), establish indentured labour, and compounds, and all the other blessings

of modern capitalism." So I should argue, remembering that much can be said on both sides, but giving my vote in the last resort to Ruskin rather than to Lancashire. . . . But we are still on Malabar Hill. That wretched pall of smoke seduced me into a discussion on economics, when I meant virtuously to keep on the path of the guide-book. We are still on Malabar Hill, where the reservoir is; where the Towers of Silence are; where the obscene vultures are (on the trees over there, waiting for Something which they know will come); and finally, where some of the most beautiful villas in the world are. These villas, I am told, are mostly built by, and inhabited by, wealthy Parsees. The Parsees are the plutocrats of Bombay, of India. They own the cotton mills; heap up wealth, spend it (unlike the Hindus) in good living, in works of charity and benevolence, in building beautiful houses. Once upon a time these houses were tenanted by Englishmen. Now something has happened which happens also in Brixton, Clapham, Tooting — everywhere: rents have risen. The Briton, unable to pay £500 to £800 a year for his house, retires to





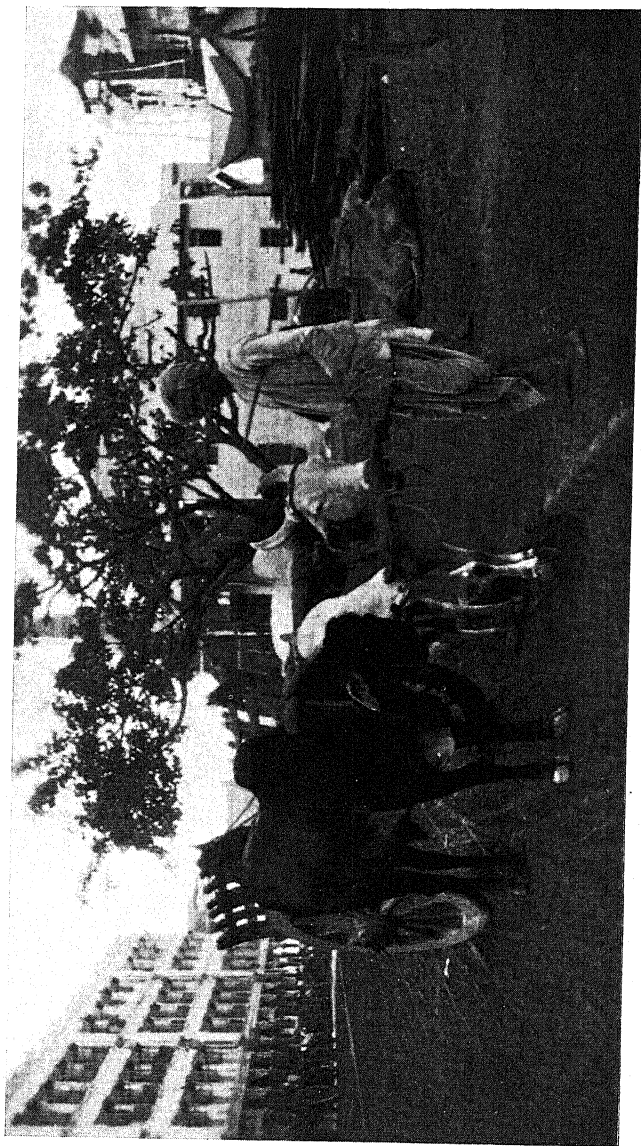
CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL, BOMBAY.

the comparatively humble flat in the Fort, while the Parsee enters into and enjoys his inheritance on the Hill. There is no moral here, except that in the race for wealth the Parsee seems to have beaten the Briton.

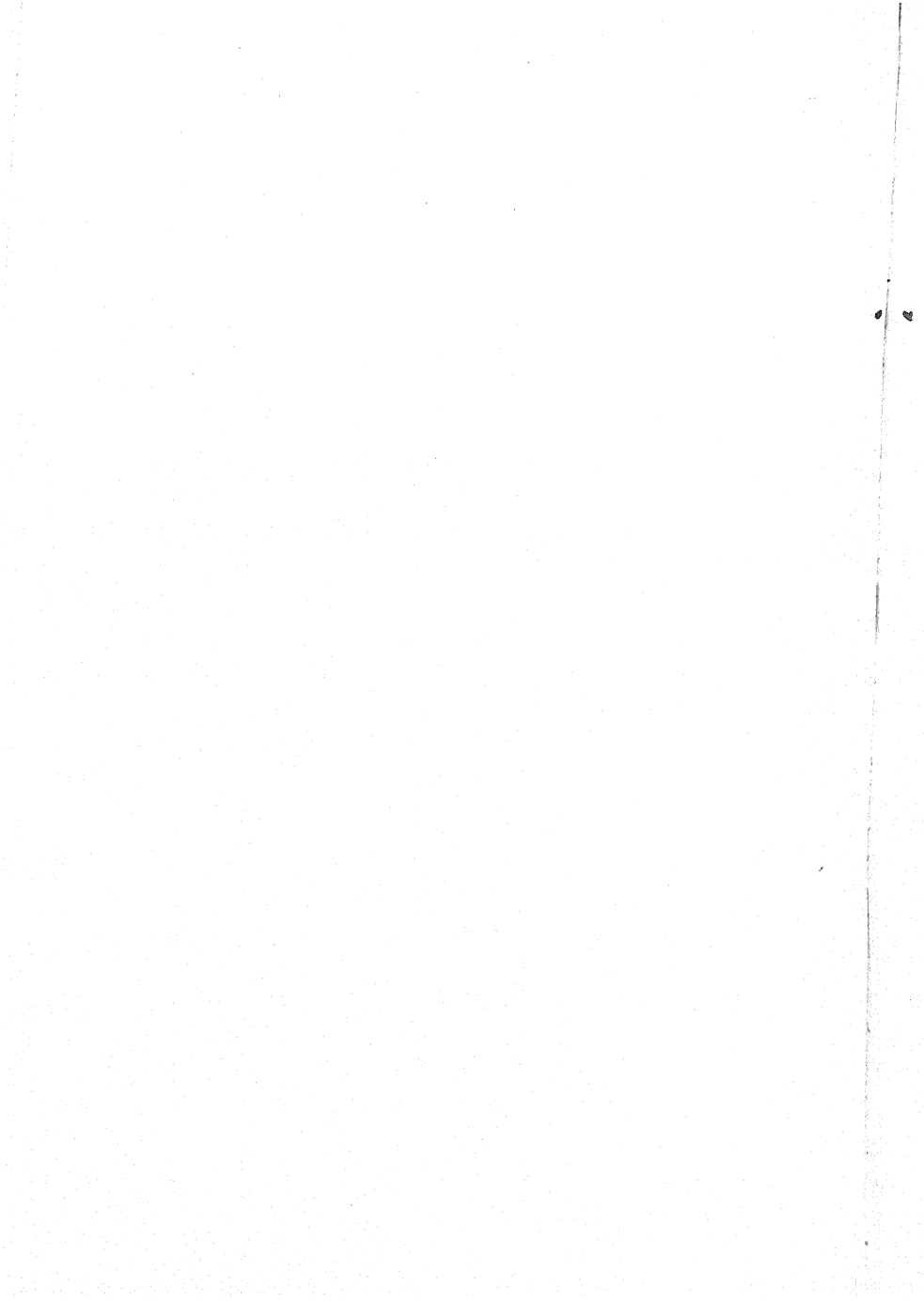
There are, it should be said, three Bombays: the European, the Industrial, and the Native. Of the Industrial I have spoken, and shall hardly speak more. Of the European, much, very much, could be said. For this is the obvious Bombay, the great, striking, handsome Bombay of the guide-books. But after all, it is Europe, not Asia. I don't think we have any railway terminus in England quite so handsome as the Victoria Station of the G.I.P. Railway, or a hotel finer than the Taj Mahal; but these fine buildings (Eastern, of course, as to their architecture), shops, broad avenues, parks, are the product of the Western. In this part of the town, despite the tropical sun and the tropical foliage, you are at home. Here you have motor-cars, American dentists, Court hairdressers, and all the blessings of civilisation. Here you have English society with its divisions, subdivisions, and sub-subdivisions; people whom you may

"know," and people whom, of course, no self-respecting person would care to know; people who are honoured by an invitation to His Excellency the Governor's receptions, and those who are not so honoured (don't forget the subdivision here of people who have the *entrée*—it's like an "Early Door" at the Pit—and those who haven't). . . . When you are tired of all this, perhaps you will spend an hour in the Native Town.

The Native Town is, I hold, the real Bombay. It is also by far the most fascinating Bombay. Who can fail to be amused by these wonderful bazaars, by the shifting, hurrying, gaily-coloured crowds in these twisted streets? If Port Said was the East in sample, here is the East in bulk. How various it is, how frightfully fecund! Come down with me into the swarming Bhendi Bazaar, or into the street of Shaik Memon. Doesn't it satisfy your imagination as a picture of the East? The narrow street, with its flow of cosmopolitan life; "East Arabs from Muscat," says a friendly guide-book, "Persians from the Gulf, Afghans from the northern frontier, shaggy black Belooches, islanders from the Laccadives and Maldives,



A BULLOCK CART.



Malagashes, Malays, Chinese, throng and jostle with Parsees, Jews, Rajputs, Fakirs, Portuguese, Sepoys ;" the windowless shops, with squatting salesmen and artificers, and enticing Indian wares ; the hordes of naked chocolate-coloured children ; the noise, the movement, the colour. Let us stop our gari here at the Jumma Musjid. Immediately we descend from the carriage we are surrounded by the chocolate-coloured infants crying "Sahib ! Sahib !" much to the annoyance of a policeman in sandals, knickerbockers and yellow cap, who would not have the Sahibs disturbed. Unwisely, perhaps (but who could resist these little brown animals ?), we scatter a little back-sheesh and move on. "This Mosque," says our friend, "is the principal Mohammedan place of worship in the city. It looks quiet enough now, doesn't it ? But it is the danger spot of Bombay. How well I remember being on duty here one night in '93, when out from the Mosque rushed a crowd of frenzied worshippers, crying '*Din ! Din !*' ('The Faith'), and proceeded to reason with unconverted Hindus by means of knives and other handy weapons. So began the great riots of that

year, when much blood was shed, and when this street rang to the volleys of the military. Will it ever happen again? Oh dear me, yes. As long as men believe in religion we shall have men killing each other for the love of souls. Catholic and Protestant in old Ireland: Mohammedan and Hindu here. . . ." We move on a little further and visit a diminutive shop presided over by a diminutive man of venerable appearance. What is the venerable person selling? It is hard to say, for no wares appear: nothing is visible but a pair of scales and a small heap of dirty brown substance of the consistency of putty. I take some in the palm of my hand and examine it. It exhales a faint odour of poppies. Opium? Yes: it is opium; and here are the venerable person's customers: boys in their teens, low-caste women with shrivelled, gaunt faces, men of all ages. I can't moralise on this scene, for I don't know—nobody seems to know—exactly how much harm opium does to the Indian. Some say it is ruinous; others, that it is comparatively harmless, only making the poor Indian forget his woes for a brief season. Let us not speak of it—*ma guarda*

e passa. Here is a drink-shop: a place for the sale of country spirit; not gilded and bright like our public-houses at home, but squalid, mean. Yet see: there is a constant stream of thirsty ones (it is warm here, my brothers!)—entering, staying but a moment to toss off a glass of crude spirit, coming out and wiping lips in quite the Western way. These are mostly mill operatives: there is a factory round the corner. And their race and religion? Mohammedan, Hindus . . . Jews, Greeks, Barbarians. “But, Mr Author, you must be wrong: Mohammedans, I *know*, are teetotalers, and, I think, Hindus also.” “Nevertheless, dear madam, Mohammedans and Hindus are learning the virtues of alcohol: *you* are teaching them to drink . . . Yes, you. How do I show that? Well, in this way: the Government of India is debauching these people with drink (for a worthy object, of course: the raising of revenue); the Government of India is, in the last resort, the House of Commons; the House of Commons is, in the last resort, your husband, madam; and, of course, your husband is, in the last resort, you. Therefore, I say,

you are responsible for the pleasing process (now going on) of changing a sober country into a drunken one. . . . What is that? You don't care? Oh, well! that alters . . . I don't think I shall go any further ~~with~~ you through the Native Town."

One evening—perhaps this same evening—I sat in the Exhibition grounds, and listened to the band, and watched the crowd go by. To me approached a Hindu gentleman of age and experience. He greeted me, and we conversed. I spoke of my tour through the Native Town.

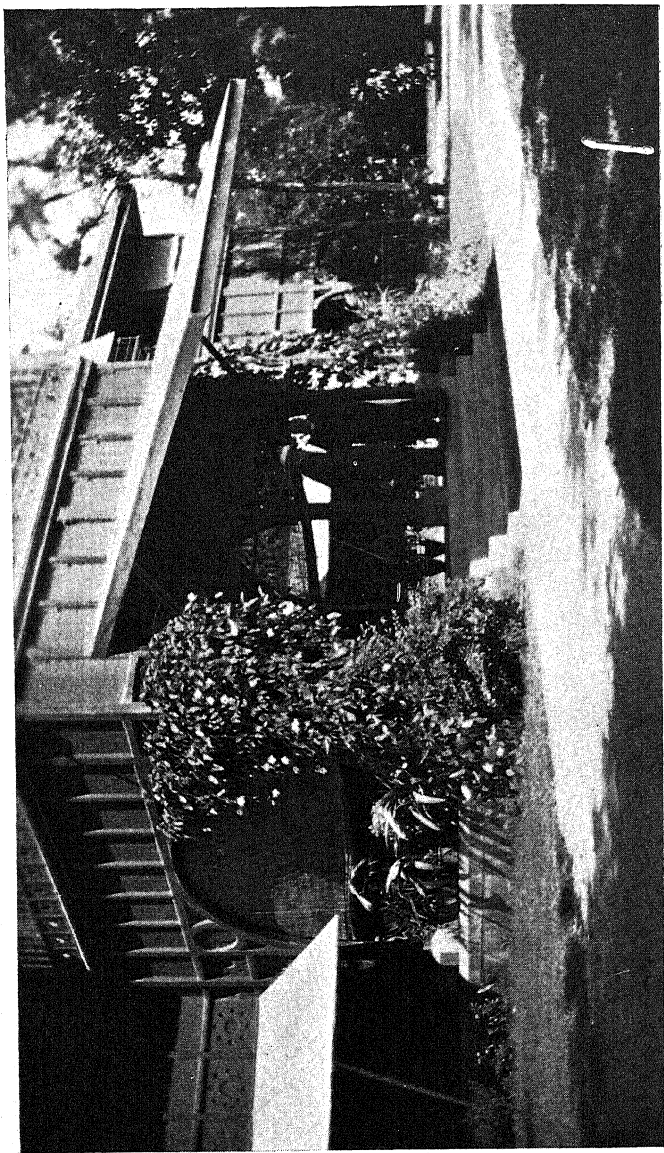
"And what," he asked courteously, "impressed you most in your wandering through our city?"

"Sir," I replied, "your question is difficult. What my dominant impression was it is hard to say: perhaps that of various, teeming life. But I discovered a miracle."

"What was that?"

"The Miracle of the East: the miracle of how countless thousands of brown men are governed by a handful of white ones. 'Many turbans and few hats,' said your countrymen in the Mutiny. Walk Bombay city from end

1



WILSON COLLEGE MANSE, BOMBAY.

to end, you hardly see a white face. There is no display of force, of power——”

“Ah! but it is there!”

“Yes, but it is numerically small, and there is no display. The Sahib is the power behind, unseen, mysterious. I suppose up-country it is even more so. That we hold India on such terms: there is the Miracle of the East.”

“Yes,” said the Hindu gentleman slowly, “and it shows the kind of people we are—quiet, law-abiding.”

“True,” I replied; “and it also shows the kind of people *we* are.”

Both of which reflections will perhaps bear some thinking over.

APPENDIX III

THE MAKING OF BOMBAY

THE hardy Portuguese were the first "makers of Bombay." Albuquerque, who seems to have been nearly everywhere in the East, touched at the island in 1503, five years after Vasco de Gama. Thirty years afterwards the Portuguese took possession, and remained there for more than a century. (They are in India still—at Goa: but—must we not say?—a degenerate race.) In 1662, "by the eleventh article of the Treaty of Marriage between the Crowns of England and Portugal, the Port and Island of Bombay was granted and transferred by his then Majesty of Portugal to the Crown of England for ever, with all rights, profits, territories, and appurtenances whatever." His Majesty of England promptly sent Lord Marlborough with a small fleet to take possession of his new territory. Arrived at Bombay, an unexpected hitch in the arrangements occurred. The Portuguese refused to give up the island. This was awkward enough; for the place was fortified and passably

garrisoned; and, besides, Marlborough did not want to risk a war with Portugal. Indeed, one cannot withhold a certain sympathy from the Portuguese, whose snug little island was given away behind their backs by their king. Marlborough sailed back to England: but not before he had landed at the island of Anjadeva (near Goa) 300 British soldiers under one Sir Abraham Shipman.

Then followed a tragedy. The island was a wretched swamp, and covered with jungle. In a short time most of the garrison had died of disease, including Sir Abraham Shipman himself. "Sir Abraham, with near 300 of his best men, rested content without any further Acquefts, leaving their bones at Anjadeva," says Dr Fryer. One can quite imagine the horror of it. The occasion, however, called out one strong man. This was Humphrey Cook, Sir Abraham's secretary, who seems to have assumed command on Sir Abraham's death. Humphrey actually negotiated a treaty on his own account with the Portuguese at Bombay. On the conclusion of this treaty—far more favourable to the Portuguese than the Royal compact—Humphrey and the survivors of Anjadeva were allowed to land and take possession of the island and fort. It is thus a fact that we first occupied Bombay by virtue of an unauthorised treaty concluded by an irresponsible Englishman. Of

course the wiseacres at home were shocked. The whole thing was most irregular. Cook had no business to make such a treaty: it was *ultra vires*. He ought to have died like the others at Anjadeva. "*Quam capitulationem*," wrote Charles II. to His Excellency Lewis de Mendoza Furtado, the Viceroy at Goa, "*neque Humphredus ille (that scamp Humphrey) potestatem habuit accipiendi, nec alius quisquam eandem illi imponendi contra Fædus tam solemniter & religiose conditum.*" The king forgot to mention that the *Fædus tam solemniter*, etc., had not given us Bombay: while Humphrey Cook's unauthorised *fædus* had. The treaty was denounced; Cook was superseded; and we held Bombay on our own terms. But my sympathies go out to Humphrey Cook, first of the many misunderstood Englishmen in the East: first, and not the least innocent.

Quite the best account of Bombay in the seventeenth century, and perhaps the liveliest account of it in any century, is that of Dr John Fryer, Fellow of the Royal Society, who visited it in 1673. Dr Fryer left Gravesend in 1672 for a tour through the East Indies and Persia, which eventually occupied nine years. When he came home he was importuned to publish his experiences, and this he did in a series of letters purporting to have been written during his journey to a friend. They make

lively reading. "As to the method I have taken," says he naïvely, "it is unconfin'd (it being the privilege of a traveller); not bounded with the narrow terms of an Historian, nor ~~loosely~~ extravagant like Poetical Fictions, but suited both to Time and Place." The Doctor reached "Bombaim" exactly twelve months after leaving Gravesend. His vessel sailed into the "vast circumference" of the Bay; and he noticed "three of the Mogul's men of war, each 300 Ton, with Bloody Colours out": for in those days the Mogul had a fleet. But there were three English men-of-war to keep an eye on the Mogul. Fryer compares the condition of Bombay on the arrival of the English in 1661 with that of twelve years later. In 1661 the English found "a pretty well-seated but ill-fortified House, four Brass cannon being the whole defence of the island. . . . About the House was a delicate Garden, voiced to be the pleasantest in India, intended rather for Wanton Dalliance, Love's Artillery, than to make resistance against an invading Foe. . . . But to return to this Garden of Eden or Place of Terrestrial Happiness, it would put the Searchers upon as hard an Inquest as the other has done its Posterity. The walks which before were covered with Nature's verdant awning, and lightly pressed by soft delight, are now open to the sun and loaded with hardy cannon; the bowers devoted

to rest and ease are turned into bold Rampires for the watchful sentry to look out on; every tree where then the Airy Choristers made their charming Choir trembles and is extirpated at the rebounding of the alarming Drum; ~~and~~ those slender fences only designed to oppose the Sylvan Herd are thrown down to erect those of a more warlike force. But all this not in one day."

Of course not: indeed, it was a good twelve years' work, or, perhaps, five years' work, since it was only in 1668 that the island of Bombay was leased to the East India Company at the yearly rent of ten pounds. When Fryer was at Bombay there were already 120 pieces of ordnance in the Fort, 20 elsewhere, and 60 field pieces, so that the place was strong. There were 300 English in the garrison and 520 Portuguese militia. In the town "at distance enough" from the Fort, confusedly lived "the English, Portugueze, Topazes, Gentires, Moors, cooly Christians, most Fishermen." It was one mile long. The houses were low, and thatched with "oleas of the cocoa-trees." Most of the people were fugitives and vagabonds. Indeed, Fryer draws a somewhat lurid picture of the life at Bombay at this time. The English lived hard, and died early. "I reckon they walk but in charnel-houses, the climate being extremely unhealthy. . . . In 500, 100 survive not." No

doubt the climate had much to do with the heavy mortality. But there were other reasons. Intemperance was rife; and, generally, men left the Ten Commandments behind them at ~~Swaz~~ or the Cape. "To old men and women it seems more suitable," moralises the Doctor. "Happy certainly, then, are those, and only those, brought here in their nonage, before they have a gust of their Albion; or next to them, such as intoxicate themselves with *Læthe*, and remember not their former condition. When it is expostulated, is this the Reward of such a severe pupilage, is this the Elysium after a tedious wasting? For this will any thirst, will any contend, will any forsake the pleasures of his native soil in his vigorous age to bury himself alive here? Were it not more charitable at the first Bubbles of his infant sorrow to make the next stream over-swell him?" The Doctor's language is highly rhetorical, but his meaning is clear enough. He only asks the question which exiles in the East have asked many times before and since: whether, exile in the East being what it is, the game is worth the candle.

So much for Doctor Fryer and Bombay in the seventeenth century. For another hundred years or so Bombay has little history. Remember its position. It was only a trading station of the East India Company on a swampy, unhealthy island. It was cut off from effective intercourse with the mainland physically by

the precipitous Ghauts, and politically by the fact that the neighbouring country was in the hands of warlike and often hostile native races. It had a powerful trading competitor in the Portuguese at Goa. It was in quarrels ~~often~~ with the Dutch. Calcutta had distanced it most emphatically both as a centre of trade and of British influence. Bombay, indeed, was long in coming to its own. It was not until after the Mahratta wars, at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century, that the change came. In the days of Elphinstone and of Sir John Malcolm Bombay began to flourish. Elphinstone crushed the Peishwá, and brought the Deccan under British rule. Malcolm broke a road over the Ghauts. Then came the Mid-Victorian engineers, and bettered Malcolm by carrying a railway over the same mountains. Thus the principal entrance to the Empire of India was opened. Since then Bombay has never looked back; but as to its modern history, is it not written in many excellent guide-books?

CHAPTER VIII

EAST AND WEST

ONE Sunday evening I found myself in St Thomas's Cathedral. The congregation was large, devout, English. Here and there (*rari nantes*) one saw young natives, dressed in English garb, and evidently on the way to be Anglicised. With little difficulty one might easily have imagined oneself, not merely in an English cathedral, but also in an English cathedral town. But one obvious difference there was: above our heads swung the punkahs, moving slowly backwards and forwards, forwards and backwards, the swing ending with a sharp little flap that made the air flow in a cool current. These punkahs fascinated me. I scarcely listened to the level voice of the clergyman, reading a portion from the Old Testament. I watched the punkahs. Now the swing was slow and

listless, sometimes dying down until the punkah nearly stopped; now it became fast and vigorous, almost excited, and the air came rolling over us in tossing, cool billows. I wondered why: and even as I wondered I discovered the cause. My eye followed the punkah cord, which was led along the ceiling, and outside through a hole in the wall of the building. Beside me there happened to be a window, and through it I was able to discern the punkah-wollah — the poor Indian who pulled the punkah cord. At times he would grow meditative, sleepy, and then the worshippers within would grow warm; then he would wake up, and the worshippers felt a grateful coolness. But always his arm went up and down, up and down. I watched the man. (The clergyman had just said, "Here beginneth the second lesson.") When fully awake, his dark eyes seemed gazing into vacancy, seeing nothing; his face, splendidly immobile, gave no indication of his thought. And yet I wondered what his thought might have been.

It seemed to me that here was a suggestive juxtaposition of East and West.

Within, the crowd of worshippers; the droning voice of the priest; the chanting of the choir; the blare of an organ; the stately ritual of a stately Church; without, a solitary Oriental, pulling a punkah for the benefit of the perspiring worshippers of (to him) an unknown God—and possibly wondering what on earth it was all about.

“Krishna I know, and Shiva, and Kali . . . and the little red god in my village . . . and the good stars I was born under. But the English God! The English are queer people, any way. Why do they get so hot? And why must I keep pulling this punkah? . . . What a dog I must have been in my former lives! Now that I think of it, what dogs all we poor Indians must have been in our former lives, to be so afflicted by these white people—a curse upon them (but they have many rupees)—in this our present life. Ho! Ho! they think we worship them—Ha! Ha!—worship *them*! Sahibs, indeed! Big Rajahs, indeed! . . . The gods make me a cat in my next incarnation . . . Heigho! aren't they nearly done?”

This juxtaposition of East and West was, I say, suggestive. It seemed to me to be an illustration of the East face to face with the West, and indifferent to it, careless of it, contemptuous of it. I do not believe that the Western ever understands the Eastern. Their minds are absolutely different in kind. The Oriental is enormously reticent. When the civilised person from the West imagines that he has at last thoroughly explored the mind of a native of the East, he may be sure that just at that moment the gods of the Orient are shaking some Oriental Olympus with their laughter. The clumsy intelligence of the Anglo-Saxon is ludicrously ill-matched with the fine subtle intelligence of the Hindu. That is part of the explanation. There are, no doubt, other parts, perhaps less complimentary to the Hindu. Centuries of oppression have bred in him the natural and legitimate weapon of the oppressed: deception. But don't let us throw stones at him for this: don't let us (I speak more particularly to you, my Lord —) don't let us rudely brand him as a "liar." We have also deception at home, my lord. (What

does Thackeray say about our women-folk?) . . . The West, I say, does not understand the East; nor the East, the West (though I believe firmly that the East could understand anything in the universe if it thought it worth the trouble: but it doesn't). Sometimes the Oriental is, like our friend the punkah - wollah, indifferent, contemptuous; sometimes, on the other hand, he accepts the West, assimilates it, wholly or partially. I suppose the former is the case with the great inarticulate India: say 295,000,000 out of the 300,000,000; and the latter applies to educated India, let us say, putting it at a high figure, to 5,000,000 of the inhabitants of Hindustan. When we speak of the meeting of East and West in India, therefore—the boiling, bubbling, fermenting, that is going on—we really speak of what concerns a few millions of educated and (highly) articulate persons there. The traveller sees many examples of this meeting and mixing. I take a few from my Bombay notebook.

Upon one occasion I was pleased to receive the following invitation:

<p>MR AND MRS ———</p> <p><i>request the honour of the company of</i></p> <p>MR ———</p> <p>AT A</p> <p>NAUTCH PARTY</p> <p><i>at their house, ——— Street, Bombay, on the</i> <i>occasion of the Marriage of their son, Chota, on</i> <i>the ——— day of ———, at 10 o'clock p.m.</i></p> <p>R.S.V.P.</p>

“The Nautch!” I exclaimed to the friend who was kind enough to procure the card for me. “Come, this is something quite Indian, and, I suppose, quite nautch—ahem! —naughty, isn’t it?”

My friend smiled.

“There are nautch girls and nautch girls,” he said. “All is nautch gold that glitters.”

On the appointed evening we drove to Mr ———’s house through the swarming streets of the native town. I should say here that it is even yet the custom for the great Hindu merchant princes to reside in the native town—“over the shop,”—just as the merchants of London city did in the olden days; and houses which to the observer look

shabby and mean, may yet have occupants as wealthy as the denizens of Malabar Hill. To Mr ——'s house we drove through streets swarming with life and ablaze with light. Lights blazed and flared in all directions — dazzling, bewildering. Crowds of dusky figures (the adjective seems inevitable) pressed round our carriage. Bands (of a kind) played strange, discordant airs. The entire concourse of people seemed to be shouting at the top of its voice. We stopped at Mr ——'s house (one knew it by the elaborate illuminations); and I can't forget the last glimpse of the street I had before entering: a phantasmagoric thing; innumerable laughing brown faces under the flare of a thousand lights. Then we entered a low-ceilinged room, wherein a goodly company had already gathered. The company was mostly English, but there was a fair sprinkling of native gentlemen (I admired the faces of some of these: dignified, finely-cut, immobile). Twelve blazing chandeliers gave us light. I sat down, fanning myself vigorously. Some one presented me with a bouquet of flowers, first sprinkling it with scent. There were refreshments

. . . ices, claret-cup. But the Nautch, the Nautch! . . . ah! here they are, two graceful, large-eyed (but not pretty) young girls, dressed (Mrs Grundy will be glad to hear) with every regard for propriety, with large jewelled rings in their noses, and many bracelets, rings, and other feminine ornaments. They began to sing, accompanied by two native fiddles and a native drum. They sang in high-pitched, metallic voices, within a range of three or four notes . . . sang? . . . screeched—howled.

COURTEOUS HINDU (*to Author*).—"You know what they sing?"

AUTHOR.—"Alas! no" (*sol.*: "But I do wish they would stop").

C. H.—"This a love song: yes, a song of youth, of love—yes, of much love."

AUTHOR.—"Oh—h!"

C. H. (*cheerfully*).—"Oh yes. They say, 'I send a letter to my love, and he get it.'"

AUTHOR.—"Not really?"

C. H.—"Ye—s. Very nice love song."

For many minutes I sat and listened to that love song. It was a lengthy story. For many minutes—perhaps for hours—these poor

girls went on singing in their thin, metallic voices, and the fiddlers went on fiddling (in a minor, minor key) and the drummer drumming. But the dance? Well, I did not see it; or, rather, I did not recognise it. The girls at intervals shuffled their feet along the ground, and made curious swimming movements with their hands. Some one told me afterwards that that was the dance. I hope it was not. I still cherish the belief that somewhere in India there is to be found the real Nautch dance: something extraordinarily passionate and poetical; but my faith is not very strong. India is a land of disillusion. I had another example of this, when, escaping from the somewhat tedious amorous adventures of the nautch sirens, I visited a conjuring entertainment in another room. "Here," thought I with satisfaction, "here shall I see the famed magic of the East: the trick of the growing mango tree perhaps. Or the legendary trick of climbing a rope and disappearing into thin air." Alas! the tricks that I saw performed on this evening at the Nautch party I had seen performed, and with infinitely more finish and conviction, by

Messrs Maskelyne at the Egyptian Hall. What? This the magic of the East! The dark-skinned conjurer certainly did a great many of the usual things: he had a number of card tricks, exactly similar to those performed in the drawing-rooms of the West; he separated and joined certain iron rings with all the dexterity of conjurers at English country fairs; I believe he produced things from a hat—or was it from his mouth?—but this was all. I noticed that the native audience was delighted with the conjuring: rolled its eyes and uttered little exclamations of wonder; and I thought that perhaps we had here a key to the traditional mystery and miracle of the East. Suppose a people, simple-minded and childlike, profoundly astonished at anything the least removed from the obvious; and suppose an intelligent minority taking advantage of this innocence, and producing things—long, snaky, coloured-paper things—from their mouths; or making mango trees grow under handkerchiefs where none grew before; haven't we here, I say, a hint as to how the whole edifice of Eastern mystery and miracle arose? Certain it is

that the edifice crumbles away at the approach of the sceptical Western. There are no miracles in the East to-day (*pace* Mrs Besant) that we cannot do, and do better, in the West. I wish it were not so. I have a passionate desire to believe in Eastern mystery and miracle: I should like to think that a man can really climb up a rope which is attached to nothing visible and vanish before one's astonished eyes; but I don't find this belief possible, because — well, because, to quote Mr Arnold's immortal words: "Miracles (of this kind) do not happen." One crumb of comfort remains. Perhaps the East does not think the West worthy of a miraculous display. Perhaps in the holy city of Benares, or in that other holy city of Lhasa, there are men who could do far more wonderful things than this, "if they had the mind," or if they considered the audience worthy. Mrs Besant says it is so; hints of remarkable persons in India, who, without moving their corporeal frames, can pay (literally) flying visits to Paris and London and be back in time for breakfast next morning. I can only say that I

fervently hope Mrs Besant is right. And I should like to meet some of these persons, whether in the body or out of the body it matters not.

The strains of a gramophone—a modern, obvious, blatant gramophone—diverted my attention from Mr Maskelyne's rival. And then I saw this picture, which is my justification for including the Nautch party under the title of "East and West": in the foreground was the gramophone, raucously asseverating that Mrs Henry Hawkins was a first-class name; behind the gramophone was a curtain or "purdah"; and behind the purdah were grouped the women-folk of the household—women-folk of all ages, from tiny, toddling girls to ancient dames with uncanny dark eyes and wrinkled faces—listening intently to the strange songs from a strange land. It was a curious scene. And who shall blame Mr Author, the inveterate moralist, if this juxtaposition of the purdah and the gramophone gave rise to many curious speculations in his mind—speculations which continued even after he had been duly "garlanded," had felicitated the bridegroom, and had driven

home through the silent streets and in the darkness and calm of a Bombay night?

One more East and West example from Bombay, and I have done. During my stay there the Indian National Congress was in session. I know that the words "Indian National Congress" have an explosive effect upon the average Anglo-Indian, and I know also that they are almost talismanic with the ordinary educated native. That being so, I think that they, *primâ facie*, raise a question of some interest to those persons who, neither Indian nor Anglo-Indian, are yet rash enough to be interested in the country. But before entering on any discussion, let us step inside the great tent, pitched on that open space of ground close by the Elphinstone College, St Andrew's Church of Scotland, and the Sailors' Home—let us step inside and see the Congress in being. (I think I hear some choleric Anglo-Indian say: "I'll be d——d if I do. What? Go into that filthy place and hear a crowd of jabbering natives spout treason! Confound it, sir, what do you take me for?" To which I would reply: "Sir, the place is not filthy; the natives don't 'jabber,'

but speak excellent English in an excellent way; nor do they 'spout treason'—which is a mediæval Western offence—unless criticising somewhat freely the government of their own country is 'treason'".) Outside the tent the hot Bombay sun beats down fiercely, so that the freshman from England is glad of the shelter of the homely umbrella. Within, it is also hot, but in the way of the Turkish bath. Come up on the platform here, and sit down. (You will find a handkerchief useful for fanning purposes.) Now look round. The tent is packed with the gaily-dressed and good-humoured-looking sons of the East. "Highly trained Zoroastrians," to quote their President (I suppose he meant Parsees); "wealthy and energetic natives of Cutch and Guzerat; brilliant and patriotic Mahrattas, exulting in the glory of your past and your ancestors; Brahmins from Madras, with your keen and subtle intelligence; Babus from Bengal, strenuous and able, who rule and control public opinion from Peshawar to Chittagong; representatives from the Punjaub and the United and Central Provinces." No doubt they are all present, ten thousand or



THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS: OUTSIDE THE TENT.

so of them, listening eagerly to the speakers, seizing their points with surprising swiftness (far more quickly than an English audience), and applauding with enormous vigour and good-humour any sly hit at the Government. Mentally, I compare it with a somewhat similar gathering of past years: what was known as the "Ulster Convention," a gathering of the Ulster men to protest against Home Rule for Ireland. The Eastern is much the more picturesque audience. Where, indeed, could you find in the West the equal of that sea of turbans—red, white, gold and pink, with here and there a sombre cap of black or grey? It is also much more lively and intelligent. The bright faces of the Hindus compared not unfavourably with the black, dour looks of the Ulster farmers. And it is curious to remember that the farmers of the representatively-governed West were indignant at the thought of having self-government forced upon them, while the Babus and pleaders and clerks of the autocratically-governed East were indignant at having the same self-government denied them. Thus it appears that man never is, but always to be, blest. One advantage

the Ulster farmers had. I remember how they trolled out the magnificent 63rd Psalm to the tune of "French":

"O God our help in ages past,
Our hope in years to come.
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home."

At the Congress we are treated to the Congress Ode, sung by a small choir with the usual metallic voices of the East. It is not inspiriting; and an examination of the Ode shows that fine sentiment does not make fine poetry. Here is quite the best verse:

"There is no land like India,
No mount like her's so high.
For none but great Himadri
Can touch the lofty sky."

That is very nearly poetry. But we soon touch depths like this:

"But lo ! our dear old India,
How sunken is her fate !
Her children die by thousands,
O, what a horrible fate !"

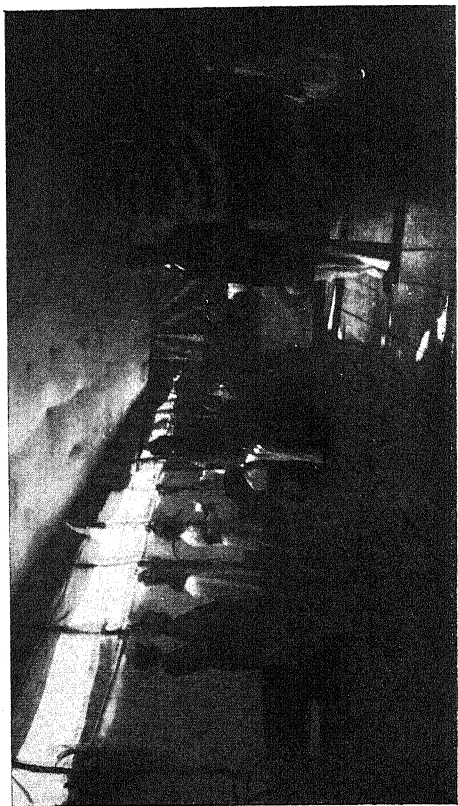
We are thrown back on the hope that the original is libelled by the translation. Yes; it is a good-humoured audience—an assembly of kindly, volatile, and, on the whole, rightly intentioned people, cherishing some real

grievances and some imaginary ones. The speakers speak in quite the House of Commons manner, with more polish and culture than the House of Commons orators, perhaps (with a few Front Bench exceptions), but also with more prolixity. The Hindu is surely the most fluent of all speakers. He is, alas! incapable of making "a few remarks." He can speak excellently for an hour; confine him to ten minutes, and he is palpably unhappy. This may be a good gift or a bad gift: perhaps it is best to say that it is a dangerous gift. But still, sitting on this Congress platform, closing one's eyes and opening one's ears, one might easily imagine oneself listening to the speeches of slightly over-cultured, slightly *empressés*, but still powerful orators in some great assembly of the West. There is the literary phrasing, the fit word, the finished and rounded period of our best speakers; there is also a tendency towards over-quotation, a slight Corinthian excess of ornament, even a suggestion of gusto, which is hardly in accordance with our accepted models. Listen to this somewhat facile Parsee. He quotes Tennyson, Wordsworth, Dickens, and various other

admired authors of the West. He declaims political platitudes with enormous vigour. I do not think I like this Parsee: he is too fluent, too cocksure. There is something of the hard commonplaceness of the Birmingham School about him. And yet he is forcible. One excellent point he makes with as much neatness as the most practised Front Bench orator of the House of Commons. He compares the Indian Government to Dickens' Sir John Bowley :

"Your only business, my good fellow, is with Me. You needn't trouble yourself to think about anything. I will think for you: I know what is good for you; I am your Perpetual Parent. Such is the dispensation of an all-wise Providence . . . what man can do, I do. I do my duty as the poor Man's Friend and Father; and I endeavour to educate his mind by inculcating on all occasions the one great lesson which that class requires, that is, entire dependence on Myself."

A neat point, rousing the audience to uproarious merriment. Indeed, when you make all the necessary subtractions from the achievements of the Congress orators, these achievements are nothing less than wonderful;



INSIDE THE TENT; THE "GOSHA,"

wonderful as examples of the immense elasticity and adaptiveness of the Eastern mind. These men know English literature better than Englishmen, and can work their knowledge into the texture of their speeches better than Englishmen. They have mastered their medium; and that medium is a tongue foreign to them.

Mirror magis.

Listening to the eloquence of the Parsee, to the familiar lines from Wordsworth and Tennyson, and Arthur Hugh Clough, to the platitudes and political maxims redolent of Manchester in the forties and Birmingham in the seventies, I chanced to turn my eyes to the back of the platform. There I saw a small apartment formed by means of a thick curtain hung upon a wooden frame. Behind the curtain dim figures moved. There was an English girl among them: for that surely was an English face, an English hat, an English frock. The figures moved restlessly. I thought I could perceive the flutter of fans.

"The purdah?" I asked of a friendly native beside me.

"The *gosha*," he replied, in a matter-of-fact tone.

"And what is the *gosha*?"

"The *gosha*," he explained, "is stricter than the *purdah*. These are ladies who wish to hear the speeches of the Congress. They cannot, of course, appear in public. So we erect a *gosha* for them. It is our custom."

A pungent Browning line came floating across the platform from the impassioned lips of the Parsee. Behind the curtain the dim figures were motionless, listening intently.

APPENDIX IV

THE INDIAN QUESTION

IN reality there are about a hundred separate and distinct "Indian questions," on all of which men differ, and differ violently. But, broadly speaking, there is one problem connected with India which (*pace* our military friends) excels all others in importance, and indeed connotes all others. That is the problem of the government of India. There are some fatuous persons who deny the existence of such a problem. "There is no 'Indian question,'" they say. "We have finally settled the form of the government of India, and it will never be unsettled. It is too good and too successful a form ever to need unsettling. An alternative and better form is unthinkable. Why, therefore, discuss a difficulty which does not really arise? *Cadit quæstio*." To this person we may concede a good deal. We may concede that the present government of India is a successful government, as governments go; that it is quite the best government India has ever had; that it is a model of despotic governments; that it contains

a large number of capable, sincere, and hard-working men; that the difficulties in the way of even the slightest modification are great. We may concede all this: and yet we may add, and add emphatically, that there is an "Indian question" of the gravest possible kind.

Put in the concisest and crudest way, the Indian Question is this: "Granted an Eastern country inhabited by, not one, but by many essentially different nationalities, with different creeds, customs, and languages; granted a government of that country by a Western race — a government bureaucratic, despotic, alien, but, on the whole, benevolent and splendidly efficient; granted a Western educational system, established, however imperfectly, in the country of the governed, so that every year and every decade large and increasing numbers of natives arrive at maturity thoroughly imbued, so far as Orientals can be imbued, with Western ideas and ideals: granted all these things, to what extent, if any, is it right, expedient, and feasible that the people of the country should be associated with the alien rulers in the government of the country?"

That is the Indian Question (in capitals). It is answered in a bewildering variety of ways by a bewildering variety of men. The old-fashioned and still typical Anglo-Indian answers flatly: "To no extent. The Indian Government must be a white government, for

the simple reason that the Indian native is incapable of exercising the functions of government." The more moderate and enlightened Anglo-Indian replies: "To a very slight extent. The Indian is fit for subordinate offices, and even these he fills, at present, badly. But we recognise that some native representation must be allowed in the higher offices, as a safety-valve for discontent. We must, however, see to it that these offices are kept strictly limited." The native reformer says: "The government of India should be largely native. At present we are not fit for entire self-government; but that will come, and sooner than you think. Look at Japan." (At the back of his brain he thinks: "We do not need the British.") The handful of Englishmen at home who support the Congress agree with the native reformer. The ordinary untravelled Englishman, the voter, the unconscious swayer of imperial destinies, if he ever think about the matter at all (which is unlikely), confesses his entire ignorance, and advances a proposition as to the desirability of leaving it to the man on the spot.

Under these circumstances the honest seeker after truth is at a loss. If he visit India, it avails him little; indeed, he leaves it a sadder, but certainly not a wiser, man. The evidence which he gathers is conflicting in the highest degree. He is assured that the natives are

incapable of self-government; and next day he finds himself in an admirably governed native State. He is impressed by the ability of A and B, educated leaders of native opinion; and then he learns that A is a moneylender, notorious for his capacity to wring vile trash from the hard hands of the peasants, and that B is a bigoted Brahmin to whom the "rights of man" only means the rights of his own caste. These are only typical cases taken at random. India, like Mr Stead's play, is a "very challenging" thing: it forces you to ask all sorts of questions. It also declines to answer them. And always the honest seeker is carefully reminded by kind friends that he (the seeker) is very, very ignorant; and that it is an impertinence and a folly for him to have any opinion on any subject whatever connected with the Empire of India. Let him dwell in the land for twenty years, and then he will begin to have a glimmer of the truth. In India these things are not revealed unto babes, it would appear: but then the revelation to the wise and prudent seems painfully inadequate. The Indian Question baffles one. Wherefore one can but listen patiently to both sides—we can fine the various opinions roughly down to two—and endeavour to strike the golden mean.

Let us hear first the Anglo-Indian. Broadly speaking, he approaches the question in this

way. India, he says, is not a nation ; it is a conglomeration of nationalities, as different from each other as are the nationalities of Europe : nay, more so, for a Russian resembles a Frenchman, an Italian resembles a Pole, more than a fighting Rajput resembles a Bengali Babu, or a Sikh a Poona Brahmin. You are apt to forget this when you consort with native politicians. These gentlemen are mostly clever Bengalis. But do you imagine that the Sikh, the Mohammedan Pathan, the Rajput, would care to be ruled by the clever Babu from Bengal ? For, mind you, in a representative government the intellectually able would get to the top : the fighting men would be nowhere. Of course, the fighting men would not stand this long. India is not a nation. Do not let the Congress deceive you on this point.

To that the "Congress-Walla" replies somewhat in this manner : "Granted that India is not a nation ; but she begins to be one. That Congress which you despise is the nucleus of a mighty Indian Parliament that is to be, symbolic of a mighty Indian nation that is to be. You underrate the representative quality of the Congress. It is not a Bengali preserve. Men take part in its councils who come from the North and from the South, from the East and from the West. Bengalis from the East, Mahrattas from the Deccan, Mohammedans from the Punjaub, Rajputs from Rajputana :

they are all here. No doubt it is the day of small things. But greater things will come. You are at the birth of a nation, and you know it not."

The Anglo-Indian proceeds: "In another sense these men are not representative. They only represent the comparatively small class of Indians who have received an English education. But we have to consider the great inarticulate masses of the Indian people, the cultivators, who form 90 per cent. of the population. What do the cultivators know about representative government? Nothing. What do they care for it? Nothing. Nay, the very best thing we can do for these poor people is to save them from the so-called educated native, who is often but too ready to exploit the cultivator for his own benefit. Why don't you hear more about social reform from the Congress? Because many of the Congress leaders are exploiters of the people, moneylenders, and the like, who, once the strong arm of the British was removed, would grind the faces of the poor. If they are not exploiters of the poor, they are high-caste Brahmins, who, with all their boasting about Western education and Western ideals, are at heart thorough reactionaries, and care nothing whatever about the condition of the low castes. For these reasons at least further

representation of natives in the government is undesirable."

To this the Indian retorts: "Granted that we only represent a comparatively small number of people: what, after all, is the position in Western countries? Take your own country, England, for example. After centuries of Parliamentary government, did your House of Commons, until very recently, represent anything but a small fraction of your population? Of course it did not; it was composed largely of landlords. Did they legislate for the benefit of the people? Of course they didn't; they legislated for their own class. Since when have the 'inarticulate masses' of the English people been represented in the government? After seven hundred years, they are only beginning to have such representation. And are English legislators all wise, sane, and disinterested persons? No one dare make such an assertion. Have you no caste system in your own country? Let the poor villager under the domination of squire and parson answer. The fact is (the Indian may conclude) that we are the natural leaders of the people. We may have our faults: who has not? We may have our superstitions and our—to you—gross social practices. That is our own business. Your morality and ours differ, and you must accept that position. We are the leaders of

the people: and you will find this out if and when the Big Tussle comes in India."

Then the Anglo-Indian changes his ground: "Indians," says he, "are not capable of self-government in the Western sense. In the old days they were ruled by fighting men—men who carved their way to the top, and then governed in a rough-and-ready arbitrary way, sometimes well and sometimes badly, but always without reference to the wishes of the governed. The East is the land of the despot: why seek to thrust upon it the alien idea of Democracy? Again: the Indian, even the cleverest Bengali, is entirely lacking in administrative ability. He cannot initiate; he cannot organise; he cannot direct. He can only learn by rote. He is only a memorising machine. Yet, again: he has, let us say, certain moral defects which unfit him for government. He is consistently untruthful; he draws no clear distinction between *meum* and *tuum*; not to put too fine a point upon it, he is often hopelessly corrupt."

To which the Indian replies: "Your argument is beneath contempt, and we should rightly refuse to notice it were it not for the fact that many stupid people, seeing it uncontradicted, would take it as proven. You say the Indian is 'incapable of self-government in the Western sense.' That statement is disproved, easily and shortly, by the accom-

plished fact. Natives do rule natives in India, and successfully. There are native States in India where the administration is as good as, and in the opinion of many, better than anything you will find in British territory. Every one of your assumptions about the native — 'He cannot initiate; he cannot organise; he cannot direct' — is contradicted by the success of some of the native States. But you Anglo-Indians are estopped by your own practice from alleging administrative incapacity on the part of the natives. You do admit them into certain minor offices of government. You may say that these offices are badly filled. They are not always badly filled, or generally. You even admit Indians by competitive examination to the Covenanted Civil Service. You make them judges of the High Court. It is too late to take up the 'incapacity argument.' 'He can only learn by rote.' You cannot become a senior wrangler 'by rote.' An Indian has done this. You cannot become a philosopher by rote. The Indian intellect is traditionally philosophical. To sum up: your great Viceroy, Lord Curzon, said recently :

“The last question that I put to myself and to you is this: What scope is there for you in the life of your country? In my opinion there is much. When I hear it said that India is a conquered nation and that

Indians are condemned to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, I smile at the extravagance, but I am also pained at the imputation. When I see High Court Judges — some of them in this hall — Ministers of Native States wielding immense powers, high executive and judicial officers in our own service, leaders of thought and ornaments of the Bar, professors and men of science, poets and novelists, the nobility of birth and the nobility of learning, I do not say that every Indian corporal carries a Field Marshal's baton in his knapsack, for the prizes come to few, but I say that none need complain that the doors are shut.'

"After that it is difficult to advance your 'incapacity' argument, is it not, with any degree of conviction. Your 'moral' argument answers itself: there is corruption in Indian life as there is corruption in English life. It is only a matter of degree: there is no difference in kind. But on the whole question of native representation in government our present claim is quite clear and quite moderate. We do not claim the franchise. We do not claim an exclusive native government. What we do claim is that more and more capable native Indians should be associated with Englishmen in the work of government; and in claiming that we are only urging that the promise made nearly fifty years ago in the

Queen's Proclamation should be put into effect, namely: that no native of the Indian Empire should be debarred by reason only of creed, colour, or race, from holding any position in the Empire which he is capable of holding."

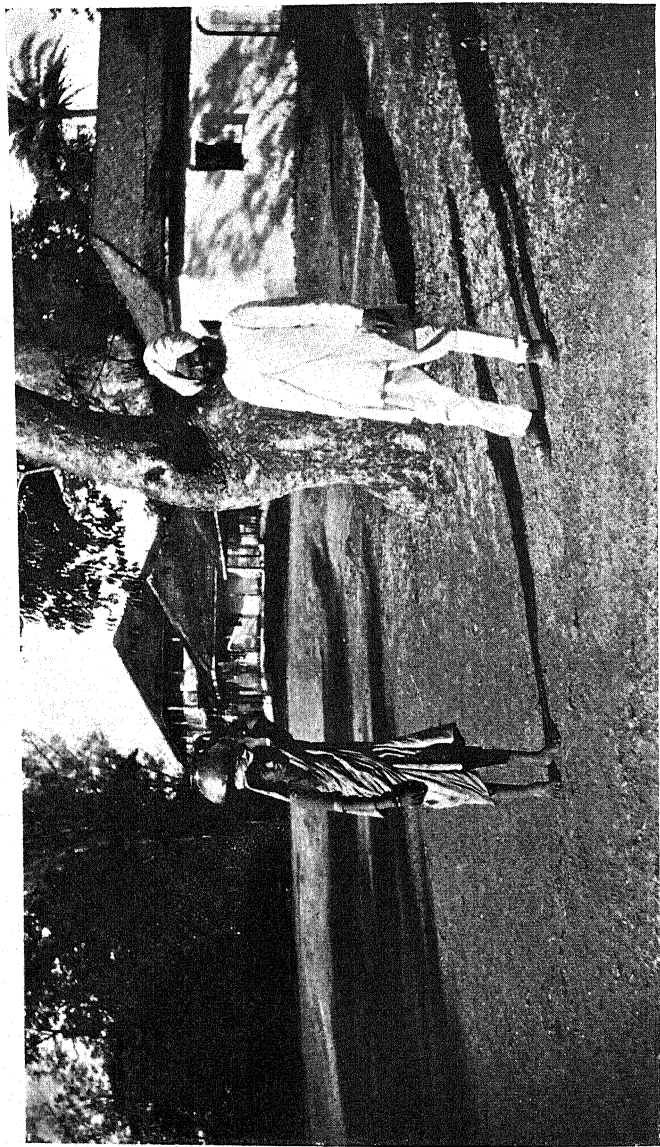
Roughly, then, these are the arguments advanced by the contending parties. Men will decide on the controversy very much according to their temperaments. If they incline to the *status quo*, to the established order of things, to the theory that might, on the whole, is right (and for all these things there is much to be said), they will more or less take the Anglo-Indian view; if they believe in political progress, in human (white or brown) improvement, in an absolute justice to which we ought to approximate at the risk of the heavens' fall, they will more or less take the native view. The reasonable man will act as reasonable men always do act: he will seek for the middle way. He will point out that, since we have deliberately given India Western education and Western ideas, we cannot in fairness shrink from the consequences. He will further point out that much can be done in the way of satisfying native aspirations without in the least weakening the British raj: at home, the Indian Council in London, for example, might well contain native members; Indians of position might be elected

to the House of Commons, or might even be invited to sit in the House of Lords; in India, the elective element in the Legislative Councils might be extended; municipalities might be encouraged; greater facilities for entering the Civil Service might be given to native students. There is nothing startling or revolutionary in most of these proposals. Their adoption would give some gratification to the natives of India.

Finally, the reasonable man might conclude, the one fatal thing is to sit on the safety-valve. And that is what we appear to have been doing in India for some time past.

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TWO TYPES: THE WATER-MAIDEN AND ABDUL.

CHAPTER IX

ABDUL

THE coming of Abdul was in this wise.

Sir F—— wanted a travelling servant, and the difficulty was, not to find one, but to choose one from a crowd of more or less incompetent applicants. These brown-skinned fellows with dark, melancholy eyes and delicately-cut features were all well provided with testimonials, all eager to work, all spotlessly clean as to their attire. I had a sentimental feeling that I should like to employ them all—they were so poor, so eager, so anxious to please. But that was impossible. So Abdul was chosen: Abdul the Pathan, with the black beard, the passionate eyes, the glorious complicated white turban, the long, slim fingers, the spindle legs.

Next morning I was awakened at an unconscionable hour by a tap at my bedroom door.

AUTHOR (*lazily*).—"Oh, come in."

[*Enter Abdul, salaaming profoundly.*]

ABDUL—"Any business for me?"

AUTHOR (*still sleepily*).—"Business? Oh, bring me chota hazri, and don't hurry."

[*I roll over to sleep again; but am again awakened in an irritatingly short time.*]

ABDUL (*putting tea on table*).—"Chota hazri, sir."

[*I waken myself with an effort and pour out tea.*]

ABDUL—"Any more business for me?"

AUTHOR (*aside*).—"Hang it all! I shall have to live up to this man." (*Aloud*) "Er—yes, you might brush my clothes."

[*Abdul proceeds to do so.*]

AUTHOR (*sipping tea and eating dry toast*).—"By the way, what did you say your name was?"

ABDUL (*brushing vigorously*).—"His name is Gifour Khan: a very good name." [*Abdul often speaks in the third person.*]

AUTHOR.—"H'm! The name's all right, but I think I must have a shorter one. Let's see——"

ABDUL (*folding up trousers*).—"His name is also Abdul."

AUTHOR.—"Ha! That's better. I shall call you Abdul."

ABDUL (*proudly*).—"The name of my ancestors."

AUTHOR.—"Yes?"

ABDUL.—"Yes, sir (*with great solemnity*). It means holy."

AUTHOR.—"A good meaning. I suppose you are a Mohammedan?"

ABDUL.—"He is a Mohammedan. He says one God (*pointing upward*) and one prophet. Some say one God, one prophet, and many saints. They bad men. The English say one God, and Christ His prophet. Christ a very good prophet. Oh yes. Mohammedans think Christ a *very* good prophet——"

[*Abdul, further interrogated, becomes reminiscent.*]

"He was not always a servant like this—phw!—brushing clothes—brushing boots! No. He was a writer, he was a Government man. Then troubles come. It was the will of Allah (*Abdul sighs mournfully*). The Sahib would hear my troubles? I am a Benares man.

Benares is a holy city? Yes, for Hindu man, not for a Mohammedan man. One day I was in my house . . . then . . . I see a snake——”

AUTHOR.—“A snake?”

ABDUL (*excitedly*).—“Ye—es! a snake. He put his head out of the wall. Hiss! he go like that. Then I put out my hand to catch him by the neck. So (*illustrates*). But—kik-kik-kik, he catch me too quick in the hand. There (*points to palm of right hand*)—he bite me. But I kill him all the same. Then at once my wife go and makes the iron hot. She burns my hand—deep, deep. It save my life; but my hand swell up, up, and my arm swell very much up, and I suffer much pain. And the doctors they can do nothing. I go to many doctors. They cut me. They take my money. I sell my house, my little house. Ye—es, they take much money—kik-kik. But my hand keep stiff. I could write no more. So I am a poor man. I brush clothes, boots—phw! . . . Then I had a son: a big son. He very tall. He Government man, too. He take sick. The doctors can do nothing. He die . . . It was God. The will of Allah be done——”

AUTHOR (*yawning*).—"Now I think you had better go and turn on the bath."

(*Abdul departs. There is a distant sound of splashing water: then a stillness, and Abdul re-enters*).—"Bath ready, sir. Any more busi——"

AUTHOR (*emphatically*).—"No!"

Abdul had many engaging ways. He was a good servant within his limits; but these limits were clearly defined. He had a certain childlike lack of initiative. He would do what he was bidden to do faithfully: but omit to tell him that, as the train started at 8.30 it would be needful to have the luggage ready at 8.0, and you would probably have an excited scurry for the train. Little things daunted him. It was no uncommon occurrence to find, on arriving at a strange, bewildering station, that Abdul was missing. With infinite trouble I would collect our baggage, and then, "Where, O where is Abdul?" Wandering along the sun-baked platform I would finally discover him, locked in his carriage, perhaps, gazing out of the window with hopeless, agonised face.

"He cannot get out! He cannot get out!" he would yell, with all the finality of Mr

Sterne's starling; and when I procured his liberation, Abdul's countenance assumed the expression of a man who had just been released from prison after ten years' penal servitude. Abdul had depths of savage, untamed fierceness in him which were occasionally stirred in defence of his two Sahibs. I well remember how at a hospitable bungalow up-country, I was compelled to rebuke him for his excessive zeal in our cause. He had ordered *chota* to be brought to my bedside at seven. It was brought at six. Thus it was that all that day there were behind the scenes sounds of voices raised in altercation, and when Abdul and the house servants chanced to meet *coram publico*, I observed the exchange of angry and contemptuous glances. Finally the trouble reached the ears of the Mem-sahib, and I undertook to rebuke Abdul. I did so. I pointed out that we were not now staying at a hotel, but at a private house, and that in consequence whatever was, was right. Abdul could not see it in this light. He explained that he was a Pathan, a servant with many testimonials (which he was quite willing to produce)—a good servant; the other servants were—(here Abdul made a

significant native gesture which meant unutterable things); he knew his duty to his master; when his master said seven, seven it must be. I terminated the argument by peremptorily ordering Abdul to be silent. No doubt he was grieved at my failure to appreciate his zeal. Occasionally he would steal a mournful glance at me, as who should say, "Here is a Sahib who is palpably unaware of his great good fortune in being served by a Pathan with testimonials."

Abdul, it is true, was a simple, uncomplicated creature, but his was a shrewd simplicity. He was near akin to the pious Scot who knows the value of sixpence as well as any man. Abdul knew to an anna the wages that were due to him at any given moment; and if perchance these wages were not paid promptly on the morning on which they were due, hints were not wanting from Abdul well before midday. Also he had an eye on the future, and would take advantage of quiet times during our expeditions in the Mofussil to impress upon me what great things I could do for him in England. "When you get back to your country, sir——"

AUTHOR.—"Yes?"

ABDUL (*hesitatingly*).—"I am a poor man, sir. I have many people to keep."

AUTHOR.—"Well, what do you want?"

ABDUL.—"If the Sahib would speak to rich gentlemen in London who want good servant. Abdul is a good servant. He has testimonials" (*fumbles in the recesses of his garments for papers*).

AUTHOR.—"No, no. I don't want to see your testimonials."

ABDUL.—"He is a poor man. If the Sahib would speak——"

AUTHOR.—"I won't forget you, Abdul."

But mostly it was Abdul the Simple who interested me. He had certain childlike beliefs: in the Prophet; in the ordinances of his religion; in Government (always apparently with a large G); in his own virtues; in the virtues of his wife. (He had only one wife, not four, explaining that four wives, while desirable, were costly.) Once I noticed that he had eaten nothing all day. I drew his attention to what I regarded as an important omission. "Don't you ever eat anything?" I asked.

ABDUL (*cheerfully*).—"Oh yes, he eats. Ye—s."

AUTHOR.—“It must be on the sly, then.”

ABDUL.—“He eats at three o'clock of the night.”

AUTHOR.—“What? You have your breakfast at three o'clock in the morning?”

ABDUL (*as if that were the most ordinary thing in the world*). — “Ye—s! He eats nothing more till evening (*pulls out large turnip watch and points to 5.30*); till then he eats not again. It is our fast.”

AUTHOR.—“The fast of Ramazan?”

ABDUL.—“Yes, sir.”

AUTHOR.—“H'm! Fifteen hours on a little rice and milk!”

ABDUL (*reassuringly*).—“He is not hungry. No! He is full!”

[*Next night I hear dim, mysterious sounds out in the darkness of the verandah, where Abdul made his bed: sounds of some one eating and drinking. In the morning I enquire as to Abdul's breakfast.*]

ABDUL (*solemnly*).—“He is eating at two o'clock of the night.”

Soon afterwards I had a strange request

from Abdul. "Sir," he said one evening,
"May I go?"

"Go where?" I asked.

"I go to enquire if the moon is coming."

AUTHOR. — "I don't understand." (*Aside*)

"This is a most extraordinary thing."

ABDUL.—"If the moon is coming, he is
feasting to-morrow."

AUTHOR (*sol.*).—"Of course, of course!"

"So while the vessels one by one were speaking,
The little Moon looked in that all were seeking;
And then they jogg'd each other, 'Brother! Brother!
Now for the Porter's Shoulder—knot a-creaking!'"¹

ABDUL (*impassively*).—"I no understand,
sir."

AUTHOR.—"The coming of the moon puts
an end to your nocturnal meals, does it?"

ABDUL (*who is never beaten by a mere
word*).—"Yes, sir. Our fast is over. If the
moon he comes, to-morrow he is feasting

¹ E. F. G. adds the following note:

"At the close of the fasting month Ramazan (which makes the Mussulman unhealthy and unamiable)—[surely not unhealthy?]-the first glimpse of the new moon (who rules their division of the year) is looked for with the utmost anxiety, and hailed with acclamation. Then it is that the Porter's knot may be heard—towards the *Cellar*."

Things do not seem to have changed much in eight hundred years.

with his friends. We make sacrifices. Our friends come and feast with us."

AUTHOR.—"And the shoulder knot creaks. You have a very gay time?"

ABDUL (*with a broad smile*).—"Yes, sir."

AUTHOR. — "Go, then, and observe the approach of Luna. If haply the bright orb appeareth, I take it that your feast will be to-morrow, and therefore, Abdul, you may have a holiday, and disport yourself with the wife of your bosom, and with your children, and with your friends."

ABDUL (*slightly perplexed at first, but quickly seizing the idea of a holiday, and salaaming profoundly*).—"Yes, thank you, sir. *Achcha*. The Sahib speaks well."

My final recollections of Abdul are a medley of humour and impatience. In the midst of our packing operations, when all was confusion and hurry, Abdul would address me timidly: "Please, sir."

AUTHOR.—"What is it?"

ABDUL.—"I wish a certificate of being a careful servant."

AUTHOR.—"All right, you shall have it."

[*Packing goes on. Author grows more*

and more irritated as he discovers impossibility of putting more into a trunk than it will hold. He wipes his brow.]

ABDUL.—“Please, sir.”

AUTHOR.—“Yes, yes.”

ABDUL.—“My certificate of being a careful——”

AUTHOR (*kneeling before his trunk and mopping his brow*).—“Now look here, Abdul, if you say one word more about your confounded certificate, you won’t get it at all. You understand?”

ABDUL (*submissively*).—“Yes, sir.”

Nevertheless as soon as the trunks are closed, Abdul appears with pen and paper, and watches me anxiously as I write his “certificate.” After this he is decidedly happier, although melancholy seizes him at intervals when he thinks of losing his Sahibs and his regular monthly wage. His melancholy, however, is mitigated by presents of various articles which the trunks simply will not hold: clothes, brushes, books (for which Abdul seems to have a special regard), and many other unconsidered trifles. So that

it was not surprising to us (seated in our gari, for the final drive to the Ballard Pier) to behold Abdul staggering along "with the too vast orb" of his perquisites, manfully determined to leave nothing behind. I noticed a large splotch of ink on his white jacket. "Yes," cried Abdul excitedly, "spoilings! spoilings!" by which I presume he meant that the annexation of the ink-bottle had not been an entire success. But the word seemed appropriate to the occasion generally. And my last recollection of Abdul is very typical of the man: his face displayed a conflict of emotions; the sadness of farewell contending, not altogether successfully, with satisfaction at the becoming circumstances of our departure.

CHAPTER X

KHANDALLA

THE institution of the "week-end" is as much observed in Bombay as in Belgravia. Belgravia, it is true, turns its thoughts to the sea, or to the river; Bombay turns its thoughts to the hills. In that scorched city by the sea "Ghauts" is a blessed word. For the Ghauts are but a few hours from Bombay: great brown hills that lift their heads above the steaming atmosphere of the plains. You have your choice of week-end places. There is Mahableshwar, the fashionable. And there is Matheran, the popular. But you are carried up to Matheran from the railway station on chairs; and, somehow, the idea of being carried up on chairs did not attract us; so we chose the accessible Khandalla. This little hill-station is eighty miles from Bombay. We take the Poona train, and are soon beginning the ascent of the mountain. Manfully





KHANDALLA: "MR. LOBO'S."

and vigorously the engine attacks the steep gradients (and the gradients are as steep as those of a Swiss mountain railway). The carriage becomes a little less like Hades with a roof. From the windows we see great cup-shaped, thickly-wooded, valleys; bare jutting shoulders of rock; a brown village of mud-houses almost invisible against a background of brown soil; a white corkscrew of road; oxen ploughing in the fields. Higher still, and we reach bare red-brown levels with here a patch of scrub, and there a dry stony watercourse. Khandalla we find to be a railway station, a native street, and a couple of hotels. We patronise Mr Lobo. And who is Mr Lobo? Well, not to know Lobo—Lobo the affable, Lobo the resourceful, Lobo the traveller's friend—is to argue yourself unknown. Mr Lobo's hotel was something (to us) quite new: a colony of bungalows, sprinkled about in a sheltered nook in the hills. After Bombay, it had a peaceful air. From the verandah of our bedroom bungalow there were views of distant hills, and immense sky-spaces between. There were coolness and quiet. It was good to be away from the dust and heat of the

city, away from the crowds of perspiring humanity, away "from the stale civilisation of Europe."

I spoke too soon.

But wait—I will divide my reminiscences of Khandalla into three parts: the Night; the Winding Dusty Road; and the Caves of a Dead Faith.

THE NIGHT

It was dinner-time. I crossed the courtyard to the dining-room bungalow in a buoyant, week-end frame of mind. Let me make a confession. Acting on the "stale civilisation" theory, I had left my dress clothes in Bombay. I had not the wedding garment, because I was not expecting a ceremony. A hotel bungalow . . . in the hills . . . eighty miles from anywhere. So I was properly abashed when I took my seat at table and found myself one of a small company of correctly-attired ladies and gentlemen, who eyed the newcomer with stern disapproval. It was unfortunate. I could hardly say, "Ladies and Gentlemen, I assure you I am quite civilised in the Western way; I am from Pump Court, Temple;

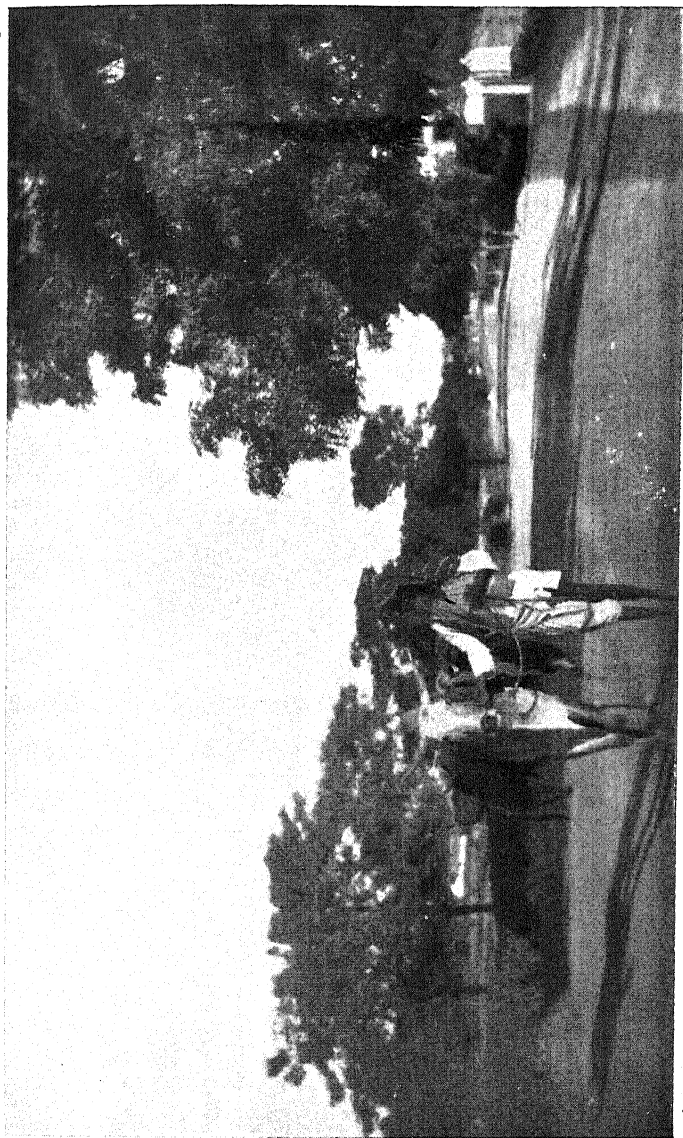
I often dine in Hall; I really have a dress suit: it is in Bombay. I offer sincere apologies." So I took my soup in silence. For the matter of that, there were many flashes of silence at that table. The men ate stolidly, and said nothing: they had not been introduced. The ladies . . . they talked (being mostly very young) as very young ladies do: the last dance; the next dance; the last gymkhana; the next gymkhana. I wondered idly what these dear girls really thought about Existence. Perhaps they did not think about it: enjoyed it, like butterflies, or kittens, or little dogs. Happy girls! There was a lady of uncertain age opposite me. What did she think about Existence? She had all the pathetic, ineffective, expedients of her sex to conceal time's ravages: a suspicion of paint, more than a suspicion of powder; but then (this seemed a mistake) she had also a generous *décollétage*. I had seen similar apparitions in Mayfair. But this, you understand, was a hill-station in the Ghauts. Glorious justification of the Latin tag, thought I; the sky changed, but not the mind; splendid persistence of Anglo-Saxon civilisation! "I'm

so sorry you were shocked, Mr Author!"
"But I wasn't shocked, dear Miss Jones;
I defy *you* to shock me . . . only——"

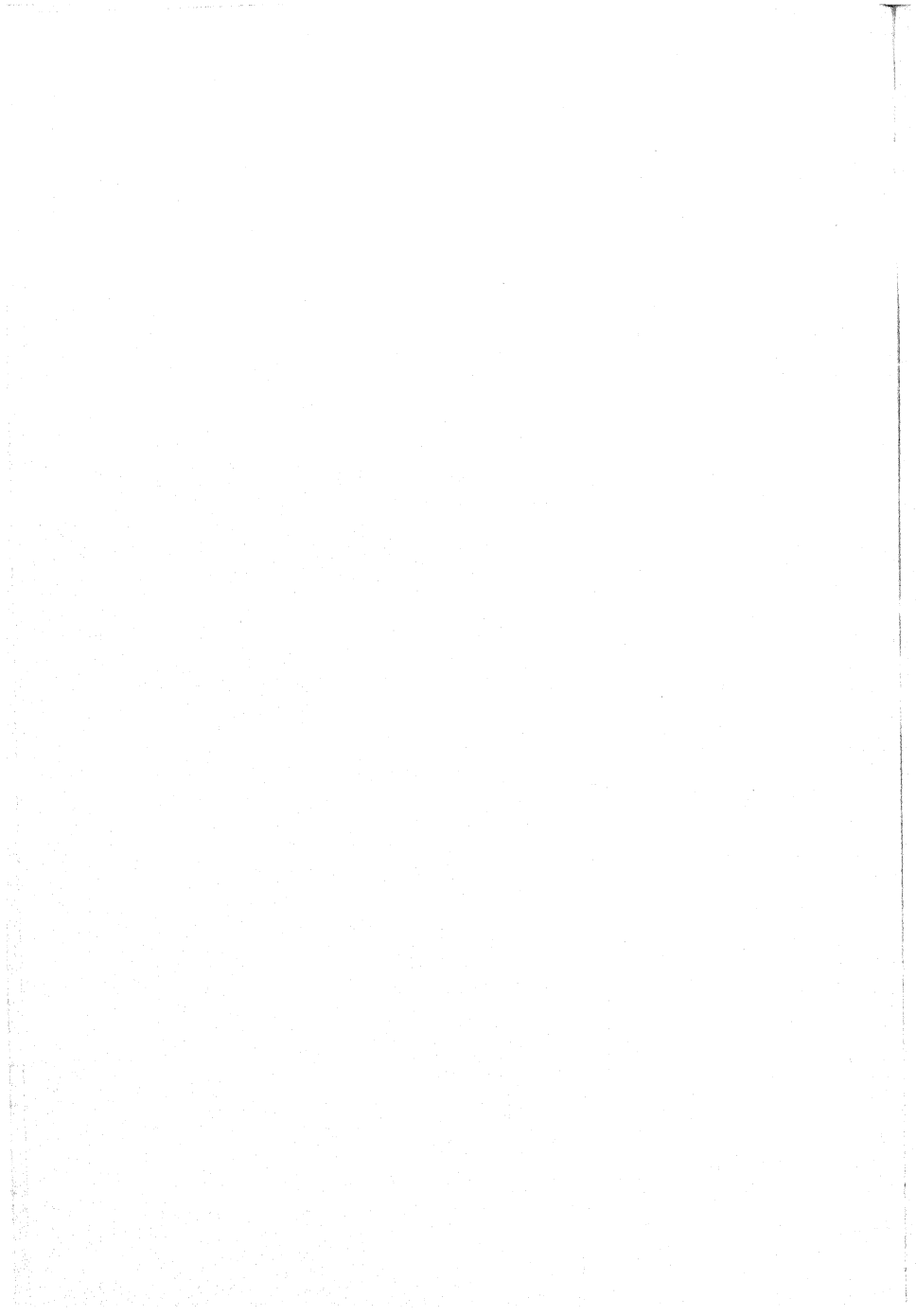
Outside on the verandah it was night: my first really Indian night. Around me was a great silence, broken only by the chirp of innumerable insects. Peering into the darkness one saw great tracts of dim, mysterious jungle, where perhaps lurked the panther and the jackal. The sky above was unfathomably deep and black. From an immense distance the stars shone brightly, frostily almost. The fragrance and calm of the night rested on one like a benediction. Khandalla became a dream. I forgot the spectres of *table d'hôte*: I remembered only the kind and loyal hearts of home—of home, so many thousand miles away, beyond dividing seas and continents.

THE WINDING, DUSTY ROAD

Next morning we rose early to see an English dawn, an English sky of grey cloud. A grateful cool wind blew over the hills. Here was a happy change, after days of cloudless blue and still heat. We said doubtfully, gazing skywards, "Would it rain?" But Mr



A BHIST.

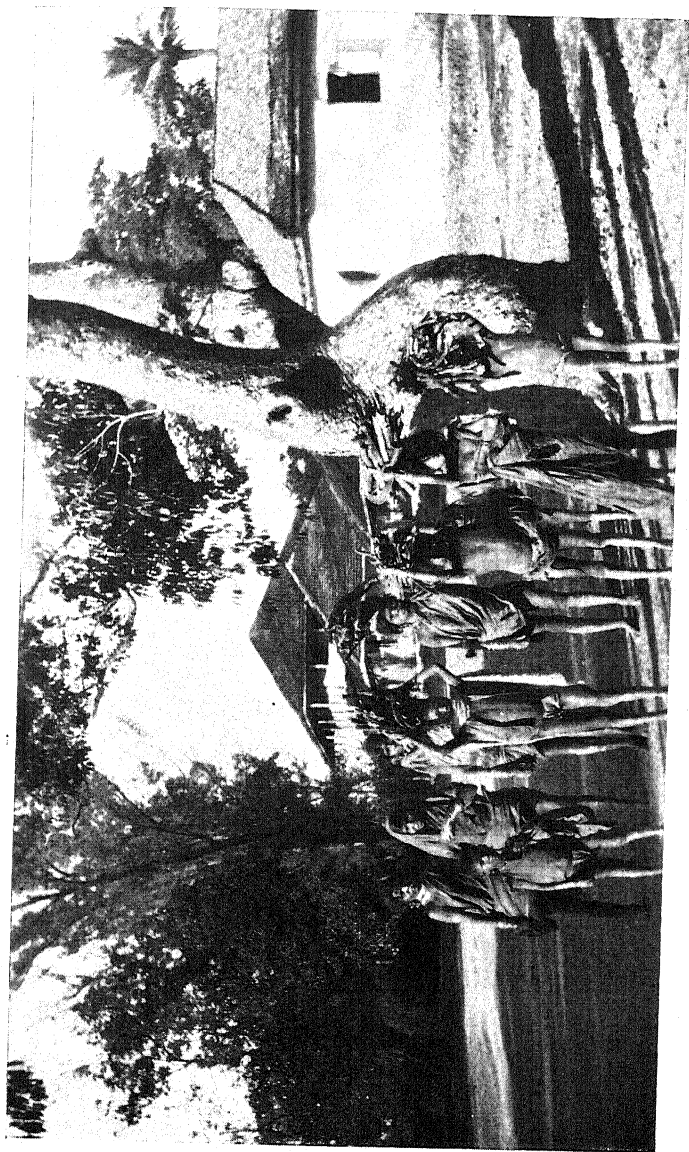


Lobo smiled, and said he wished it would. It didn't. After breakfast a "tonga" arrived to bring us to the Karli caves. ("The 'tonga' is a simple carriage drawn by two ponies, and seating four persons, two before and two behind. It is covered with a hood painted white, and is much esteemed in many parts of India as a comfortable mode of conveyance.") We drove through the village of Khandalla; past the railway station, a hotel, a Convalescent Home, and so out into the Winding Dusty Road.

I remember this road so well because, sitting at the back of the speeding tonga, it unrolled before me like a white ribbon. I could see it for long distances, straggling over the bare, hilly country. A main road, evidently: perhaps the road from Poona to Bombay—a well-trodden, traffic-ridden, road, thick with dust. And here was another reason for remembrance. On the road was a never-ending procession of men, women, and children stolidly tramping through the dust, whence coming, one knew not, or whither going. But steadily they marched on, sometimes in groups, sometimes singly. Here is a succession

of bare-legged men, wrapped up in blankets (for it is cold). They hardly look at us in passing. Here is a merry family group, a gipsy-like group: a small boy with big laughing eyes balancing a long pole upon his head; a woman with a baby on her hip; *paterfamilias* laden with sundry Lares and Penates. All tramping on. The man flings out a joke as we pass, and the small boy grins broadly. It is pleasant to see laughter. The next family group is not so joyous. The man scowls at the Sahibs, and the scowl passes along the line. Here is another small Kim-like boy, driving a herd of goats; here a shapeless, gibbering creature hurries after the tonga, crying for backsheesh; and here a so-called "wild tribe"—a tribe of aboriginals, surely the most forlorn, most degraded of Indian peoples. Abdul tells me disgustedly, when I point them out: "He is eating snakes—he is eating dirt—anything—kik - kik;" which I daresay is true.

So the procession tramps on—is still tramping. Sometimes, in the quiet of the Temple I shut my eyes and see the Winding Dusty Road at Khandalla, and the long procession



KHANDALLA: A WILD TRIBE.



— the laughing boy with the tent - pole on his head, the sombre blanketed figures — moving steadily through the dust to an unknown goal, and I say to myself, "That is India."

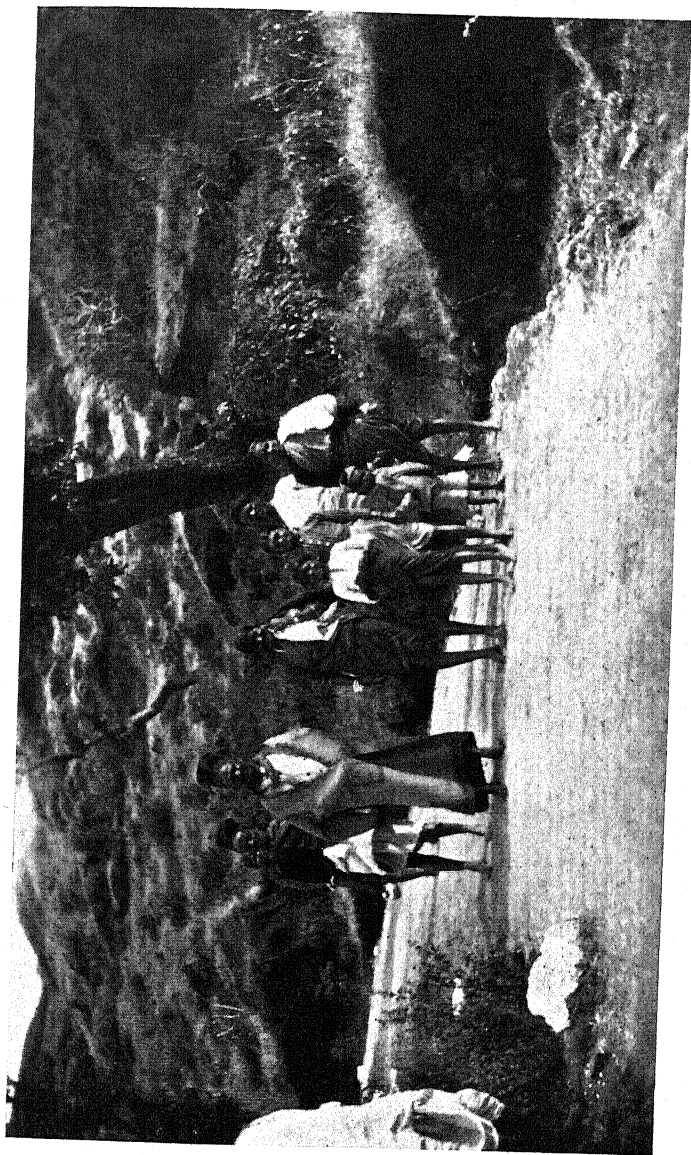
THE CAVES OF A DEAD FAITH

Seven or eight miles from Khandalla are the Karli Caves. The dusty road unwinds itself up to the foot of a low range of hills. In the face of the hills the caves are carved out of the living rock. What are these caves? They are Buddhist temples, or rather, a temple, with ancillary apartments for the priests. I have called them "caves of a Dead Faith." Buddhism is dead in India. It is not, however, dead in Tibet, or in Japan; or even in Bond Street, where I understand that Buddha has votaries: ladies and gentlemen who consider that prophet far superior to the Founder of Christianity. Indeed, there is something noble and severe about Buddhism. The wonder is, not that it has died out in India, but that it ever held sway there or anywhere else. It is too unearthly for ordinary

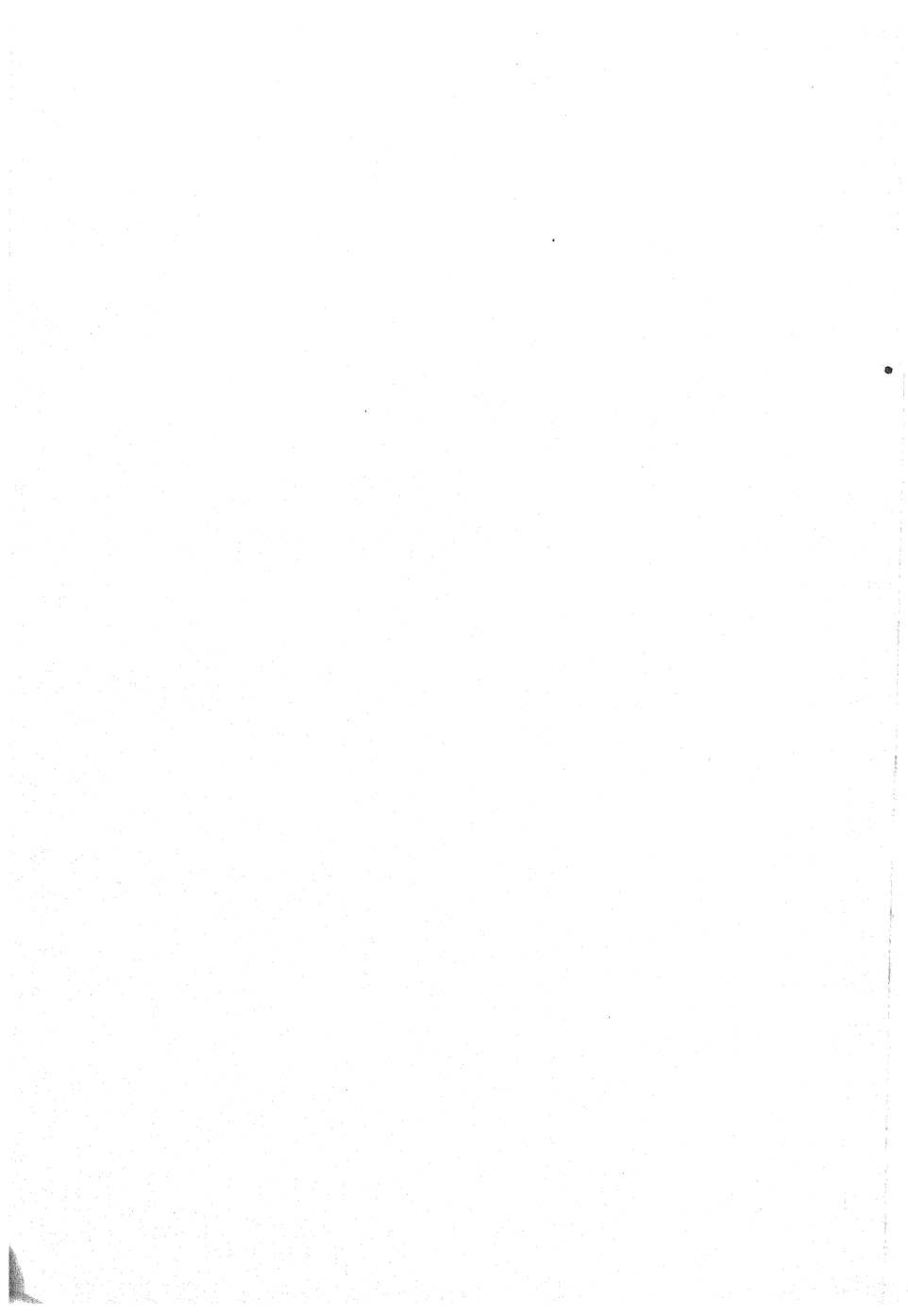
150 FROM CHARING CROSS TO DELHI

humanity; too self-effacing for the vigorous common man. Christianity seems to me to be more human, more alive to what are called the facts of life; certainly more alive to the fact that it is equally important to save your brother's soul as your own. But I do not dogmatise. Buddhism is a noble creed.

Where the ribbon of road declared itself beaten by the hill, we descended from the tonga. Then followed a quarter-mile scramble up-hill to the caves. The grey sky had gone; the sun had come out in his strength. But we toiled on. Half-way up we met literally a happy band of pilgrims. They were not pilgrims to the Buddhist shrine, but to a little Hindu temple perched up, in a Dignity-and-Impudence sort of way, close by the entrance to the great cave. I suppose the Hindu pilgrims did not philosophise about the rise and wane of religious faiths. Certainly they were happy. They smiled broadly as we approached; and when I proceeded to photograph them, they were unable to conceal their satisfaction. The youngest of the pilgrims, a tiny brown boy with a tiny turban,



"A HAPPY BAND OF PILGRIMS,"

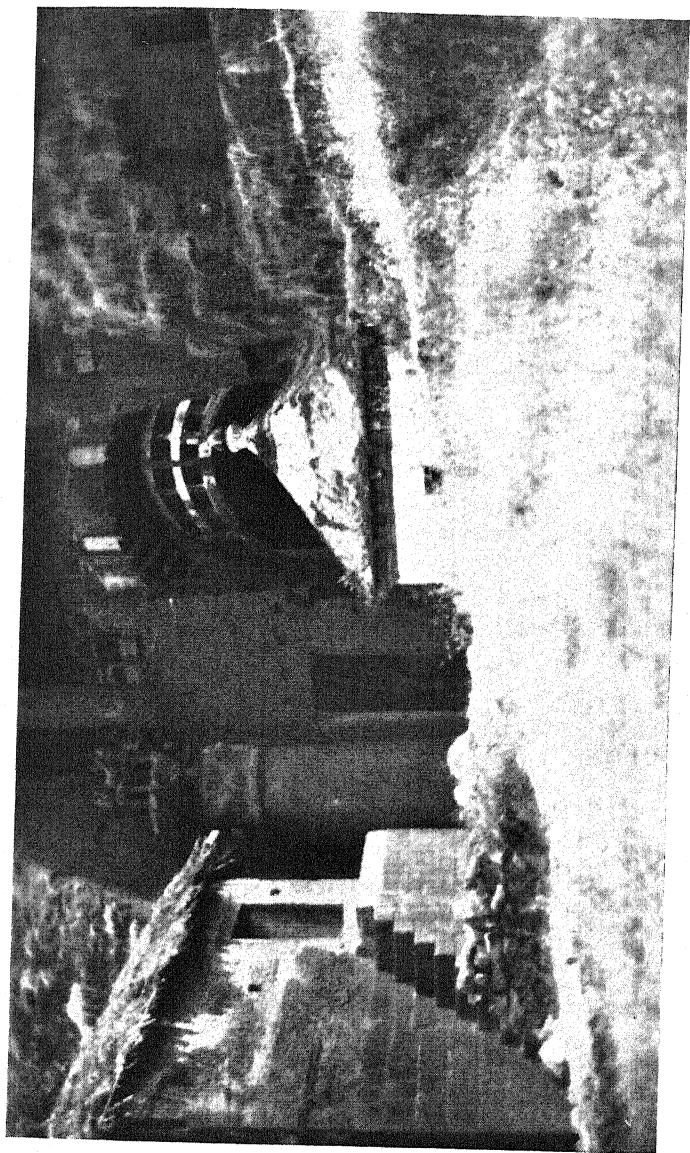


stepped forward and gravely salaamed to the Sahibs. The proud parents were obviously charmed with the performance of their offspring; and indeed it was a pretty sight. So we came to the great cave of Karli. We passed the Hindu temple, with its tawdry ornaments. We passed the great "lion" pillar, on which they say the "chakra," or Buddhist wheel used to stand. We entered the cathedral of Buddha.

A cathedral, I say, and it had the air and shape of one. There were the long nave and the side aisles; the massive carven columns; the arched roof; the shrine. Supposing one had not been told to what faith the builders of this temple had dedicated it, one might easily have said, "It is a Christian Church." Put an altar in place of the curious domed shrine, and what is there to differentiate it? I could fancy a choir of white-robed singing boys in yonder niche; a surpliced clergyman standing in front of the shrine, and saying in a cultivated Oxford voice, "Let us pray." Yet it was built (or excavated) before white-robed choristers were invented, before evolution had produced surpliced clergymen, ages before

the city of the dreaming spires (donative of cultivated voices to surpliced clergymen) had been founded or thought of. In point of fact, it was excavated well within the first century of the Christian era, when the ancestors of the reverend gentlemen referred to were running about the forests of Britain clad, not in surplices, but in pigments of blue woad. At that time Buddhism was six hundred years old. For six centuries this severe creed of self-renunciation had been preached and practised in India. It expressed itself in temples: in a temple such as this, hewn, with incredible labour, out of the living rock. It gained adherents from other religions. I suppose it brought comfort and consolation to countless thousands of suffering men. Yet it was fated not to endure. This cave is the cave of a dead faith.

Revolving such thoughts in my mind, I moved about the temple, examining the carving on the capitals of the pillars: rude, but not unbeautiful carving; not the ordinary decorative frieze and cornice that we know, but figures of elephants, each carrying two people. And these pillars—surely they owe something



ENTRANCE TO THE KARI CAVE, SHOWING HINDU TEMPLE.

to the West, to Greece. There is a legend that white men from Europe helped in the making of this temple. Does the legend say they were Greeks? I cannot remember. But they were men who had seen the pillars in the temples of that country. Beside the great caves are smaller caves, living rooms and dormitories of the Buddhist monks. Of these one can say nothing except that the view from the doors is superb. As the monks looked out in the morning towards the rising sun, they saw a vast and not unfertile plain, dotted then no doubt, as now, with villages, green in the season with rice and grain crops. Peasants toiled in the fields then, as they do now, and with the same rude implements. Perhaps the monks of the first century never did look out in the morning over that Millet-like landscape. Meditation and self-absorption do not make for admiration of scenery. But the view is there: and two travellers from the West looked out upon it one morning in the dawn of the twentieth century, and were glad.

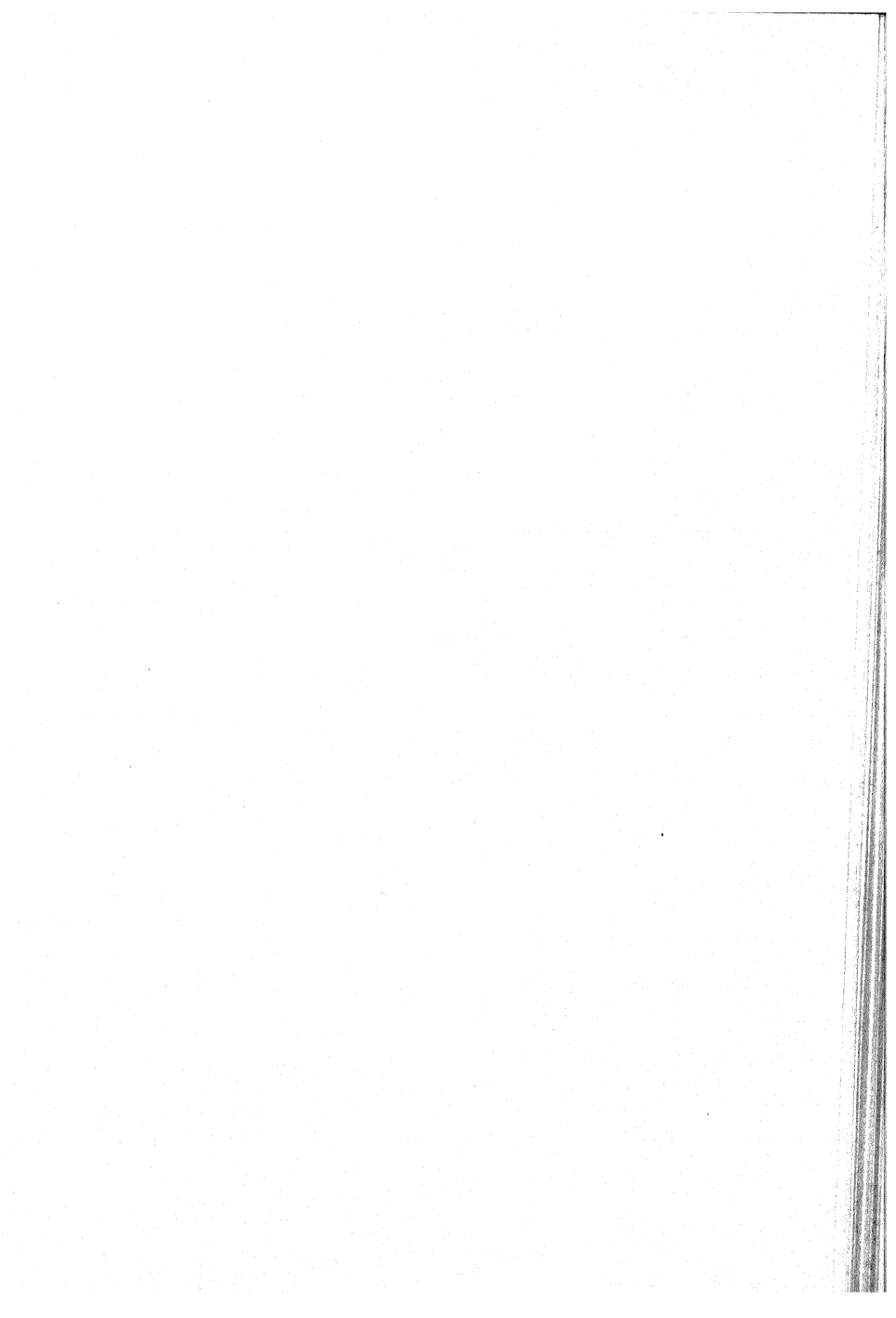
APPENDIX V

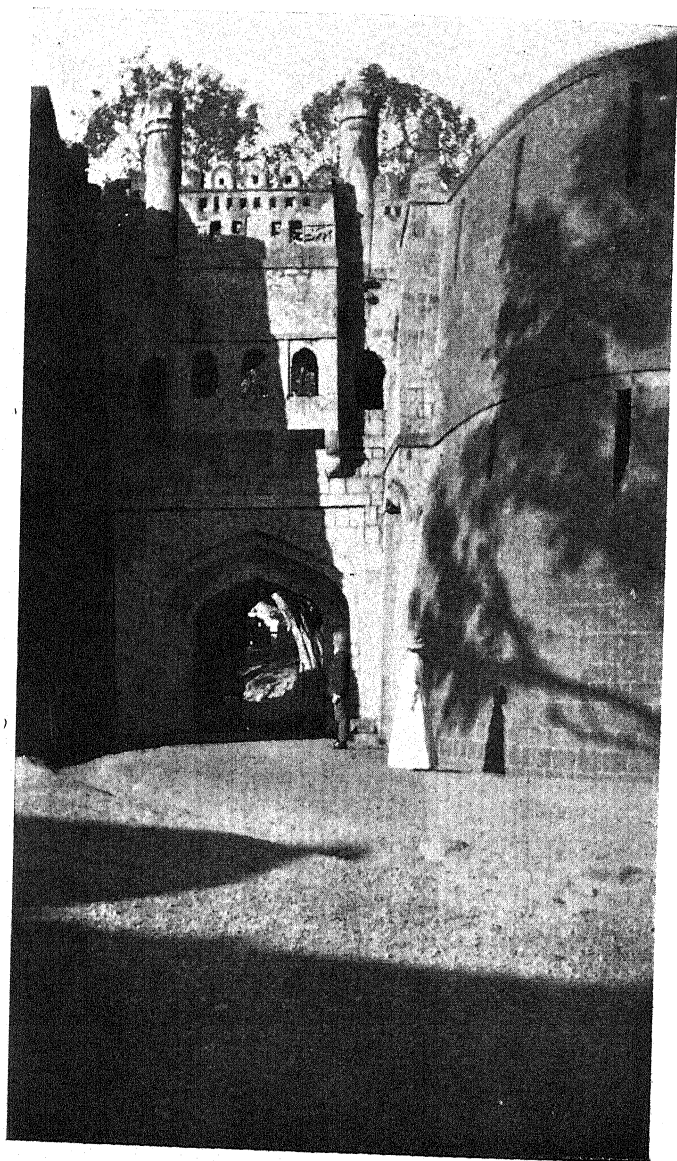
A NOTE ON THE CAVE TEMPLES OF INDIA

ONE or two important things are to be remembered about the rock-cut temples of India. The first is that they are due to Buddhist influence, and are in fact, in nine cases out of ten, excavated by Buddhists. To put the matter as accurately as possible, out of 900 rock-cut temples in India, over 700 are Buddhist, while the remainder are Brahmanical and Jain. Again, these caves were practically all excavated within the space of fourteen centuries, say between 200 B.C. and 1200 A.D. When the excavations began the Buddhist religion was supreme in India; when they ended it had disappeared. Indeed, the reign of Buddhism in India was short, as things go in that country. Gautama, the Buddha, was born about 560 B.C., and died about 481 B.C. Two hundred years afterwards the religion of Buddha attained its greatest vogue under King Asoka. Asoka was a fervent disciple of the Master. He encouraged the faith in every possible way. He sent missionaries throughout the land. He erected pillars and monuments, with pious inscriptions thereon. Finally, he built churches; or, rather, he

excavated temples from the living rocks. At first sight this seems a needlessly difficult thing to attempt. How much easier to quarry your stone and build your temple in the ordinary way! But experts tell us that the excavators chose the easier as well as the more lasting method. Granted a soft, homogeneous rock, it is an easy enough matter to excavate; and instead of having carefully to remove the stone, and carefully to fashion it into building material, and finally, carefully to build, the architects simply threw away the loose stone as it came, and fashioned the rock-wall that remained. The earlier Buddhist caves are in Behar and the east of India. Here excavation was difficult, because the rock was difficult. But in Western India, along the line of the Ghauts, and in Kathiawâr, where caves of this kind abound, the rock is peculiarly suitable for excavation. It is a trap-rock with horizontal strata, perfectly homogeneous, and free from faults and cracks. But why did the Buddhists of India begin to cut temples in the rocks? From whom did they learn the art? Nobody knows. It is suggested that the idea came from Egypt, where there are many rock-cut temples on the upper Nile and in Nubia. Asoka, we know, had traffic with Egypt, for he mentions King Ptolemy of Egypt in one of his inscriptions. But the Egyptian caves are long anterior in date to the Indian, and are different

in style. No doubt the idea "just occurred" to King Asoka or to some of his people. The older caves differ from the more modern in two ways: they have no images of Buddha, and they are constructed with wooden ornaments. "Where the wooden ribs of the roof," says Mr James Fergusson, "remain *in situ* [as in Karli], and where the rock-cut pillars of the nave slope inwards in imitation of wooden posts, we may feel sure that we are at the very cradle of stone-cut architecture, and cannot get much further back without getting to a state of affairs where wood, and wood only, was employed." It is said that the Indians borrowed the idea of using stone for architectural purposes from the Greeks. Alexander, of course, invaded India in 327 B.C., which was not so very long before Asoka's day. No doubt Greek influence persisted in India for a long time after the conquest by Alexander. Asoka, in one of his tablets, mentions "Antiochus the Greek." But Mr Fergusson thinks that the Indians borrowed no form or detail of Greek architecture. The style of the rock-cut temples was "one of the most original and independent styles in the whole world." It may be so; yet if the pillars at the Karli Caves owe nothing to the Greeks, we are surely face to face with one of the most curious coincidences in the history of architecture.





CHAPTER XI

SHOLAPUR

SHOLAPUR is a town in the Deccan, of comparatively small importance, and quite off the beaten track of tourists (for there is a beaten track even in India). It is a town of some historical interest. It is Sivaji's town—Sivaji, the great Mahratta hero and patriot. Here for centuries was the heart of the struggle between three powers, who each in turn were vanquishers and vanquished: the Mogul Empire, the local Mohammedan states of Ahmednagar and Bijapur, and the Mahrattas. Finally came the ubiquitous British red-coat, one hundred years or so ago, since when there has been peace. The British Government, as we know from our native Indian friends, is a bad and wicked government. It bleeds the country to death. It touches nothing which it does not mismanage. Still,

it has given peace for a sword (which may be a good thing or a bad thing). Perhaps, friends, you would like to go back to the Golden Age, when (here, for example, at Sholapur) you were uncertain how much tribute in blood and in treasure you were liable to pay per annum—it was a little difficult to forecast your yearly expenditure—and whether you had to pay it to Mr Mogul of Delhi, or His Highness of Bijapur, or —Sivaji, Esquire, of various addresses. Those were halcyon days. I thought of them when I stood in the great fort at Sholapur, and looked at the ruins time and British guns had made in the walls. I do not think of them now when I am writing of Sholapur. Modern things claim my pen.

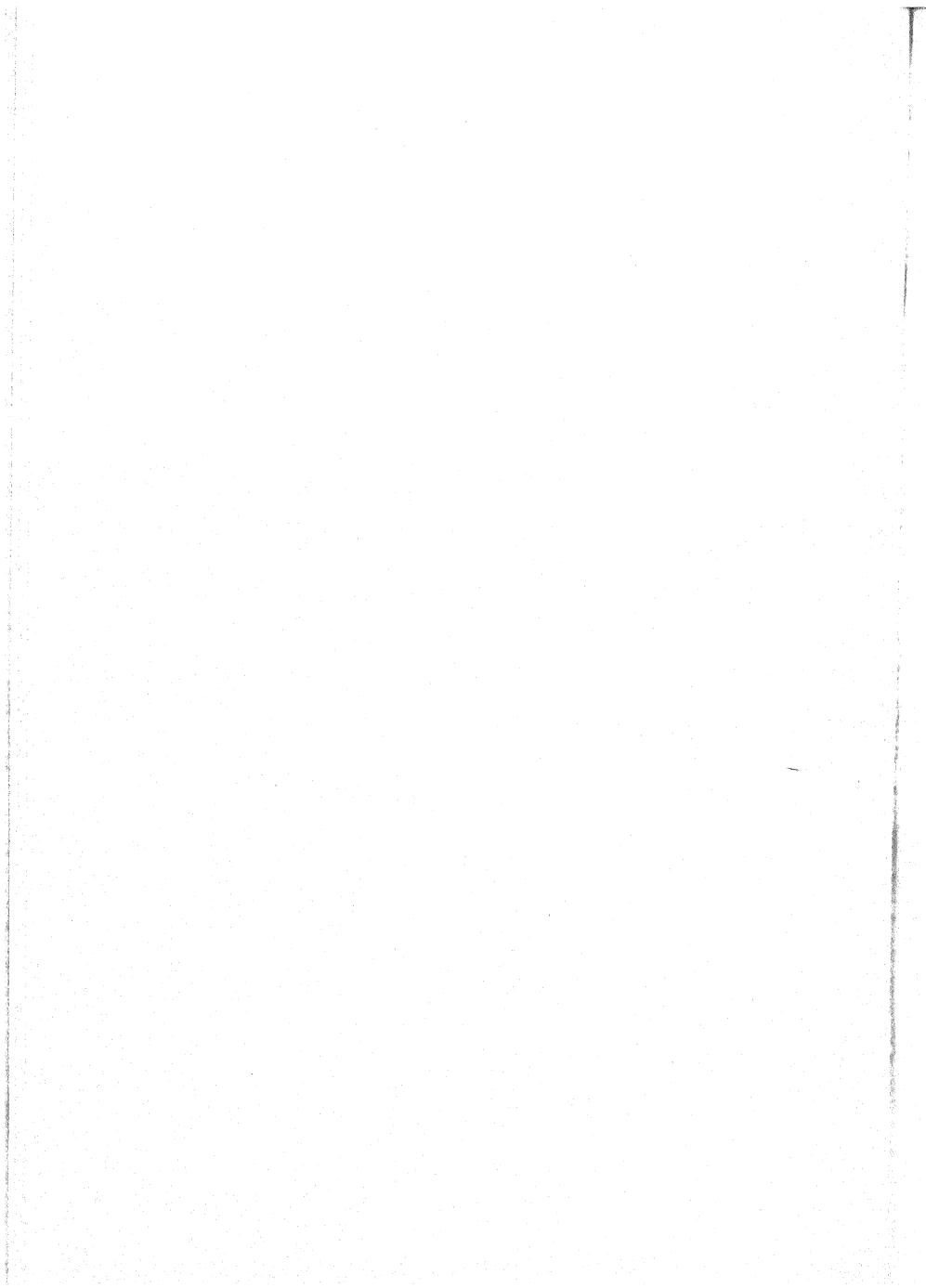
I think of a cool bungalow with wide, creeper-shaded verandah, where it was a delight to sit in the cool of the morning for chota hazri, or in the cool of the evening after dinner; of kind friends, English by speech, but not by nationality —Americans, in short—who bade us welcome, strangers to them though we were: for this was the bungalow of the American Mission at Sholapur. There are many people who turn



AMERICAN MISSION BUNGALOW, SHOLAPUR.

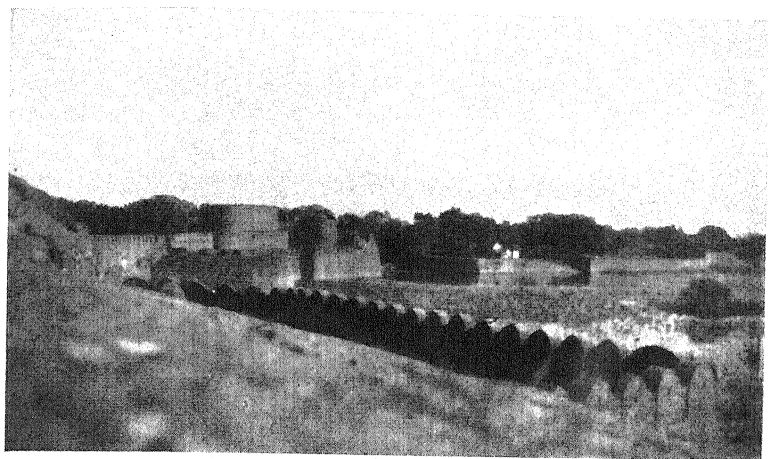


"A COOL BUNGALOW, WITH WIDE CREEPER-SHADED VERANDAH."

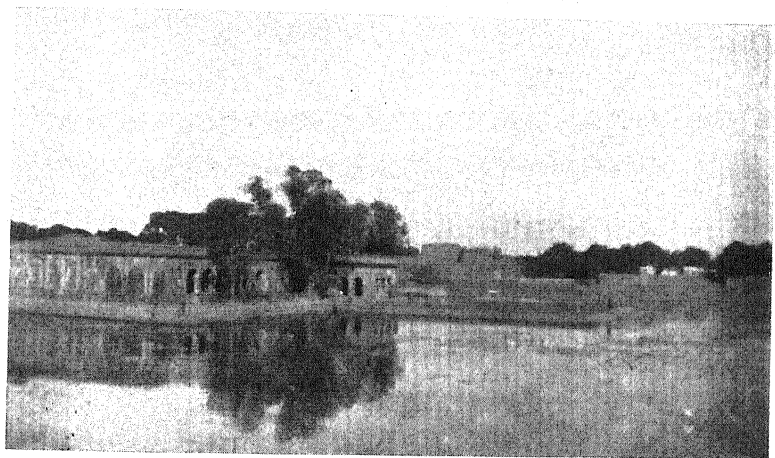


up their noses at missionaries and at all their works. They (the elevators of noses) have many fine and sarcastic things to say about them: as, for example, that they (the missionaries) had much better stay at home and try to convert the heathen there; that the heathen are not so black as they are painted; that, in point of fact, the so-called heathen profess a religion and a morality superior to that of the missionaries; that, in short, missions and missionaries are a mistake. It may be so, dear superior critic. I do not intend to argue with you (there is *some* truth in what you say, superior one!). But, since my journey to India, two considerations weigh with me and frankly prejudice me in favour of missionaries in that country. One is that on those occasions when we stayed in mission bungalows, we were received with a kindness as unaffected and simple as if it were the most natural thing in the world to open one's house to strangers, and bid them stay as long as they chose. The other is the "sweetness and light" consideration. Perhaps I shall enlarge on this afterwards. At the moment let me illustrate.

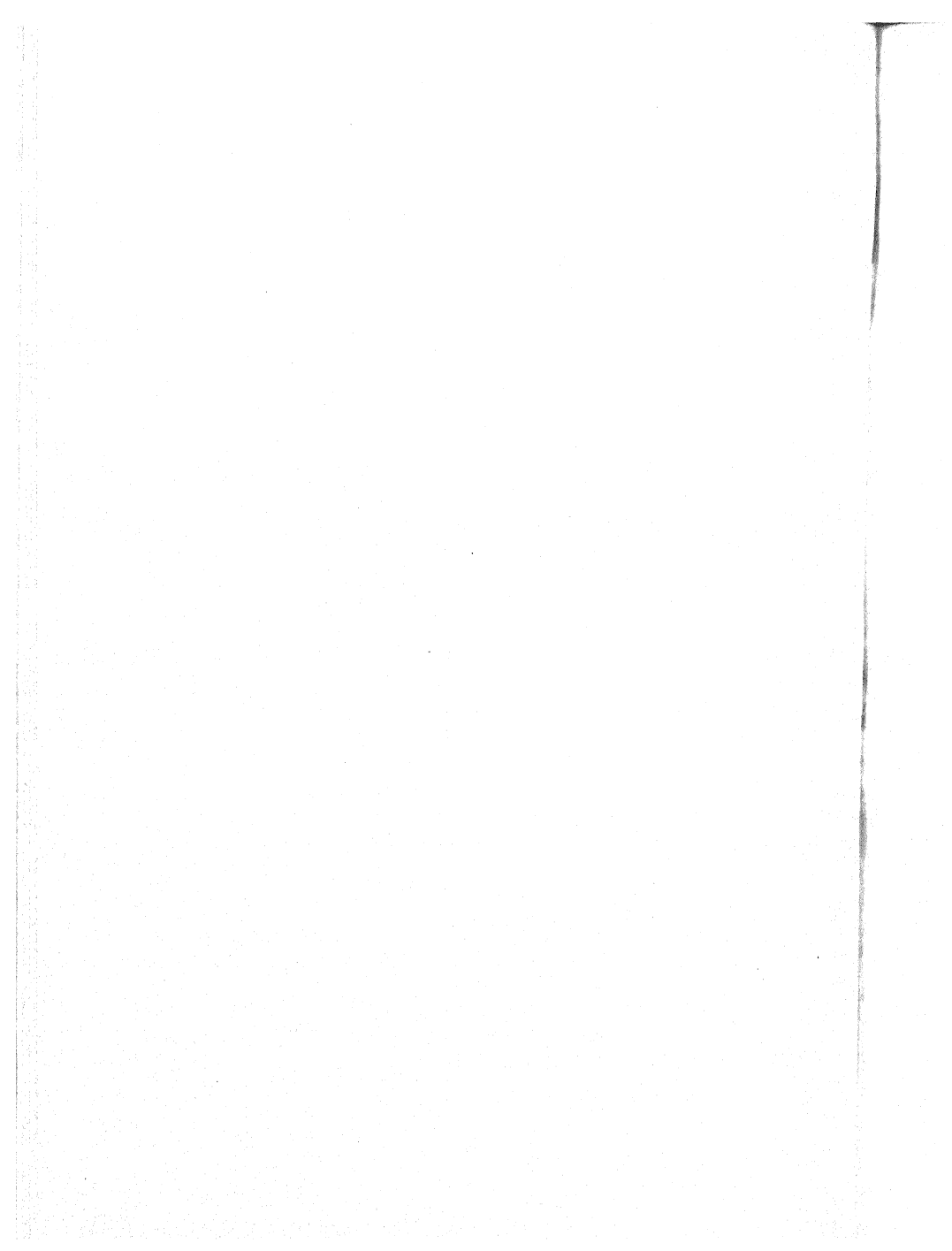
A step or two from the bungalow is a series of workshops, where you may see boys weaving cloth and making rugs and carpets. They are only beginning to learn; but already their deft fingers have caught the trick of rug-making. Swiftly they tie the pieces of coloured wool on the frame; swiftly glide the shears along and cut the ends of the wool short to form the pile surface of the rug. Though the boys work swiftly, the work itself is necessarily slow. Every stitch has to be tied on separately; yet the little fellows are as cheerful as crickets. They like the work; they are not "driven"; they are treated kindly in every way. Beside the workshops, there are schools of various sorts. We enter the Kindergarten, where a cluster of little brown girls go through an action song for us, just as the little white girls do in England—as well, and with as much enjoyment. In all my experience in India I can hardly think of a prettier or more touching sight than that of these little ones singing their song, and pattering with bare feet over the tiled floor, while they waved their hands in imitation of the flight of the sparrows.



THE FORT, SHOLAPUR.



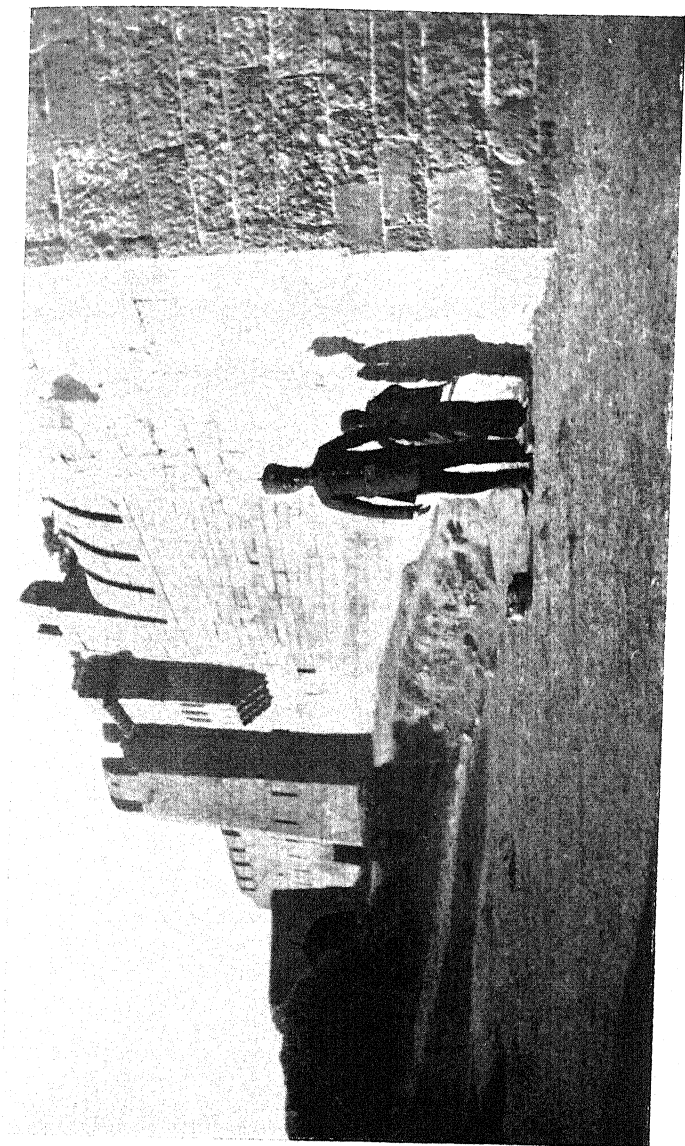
AT SHOLAPUR.



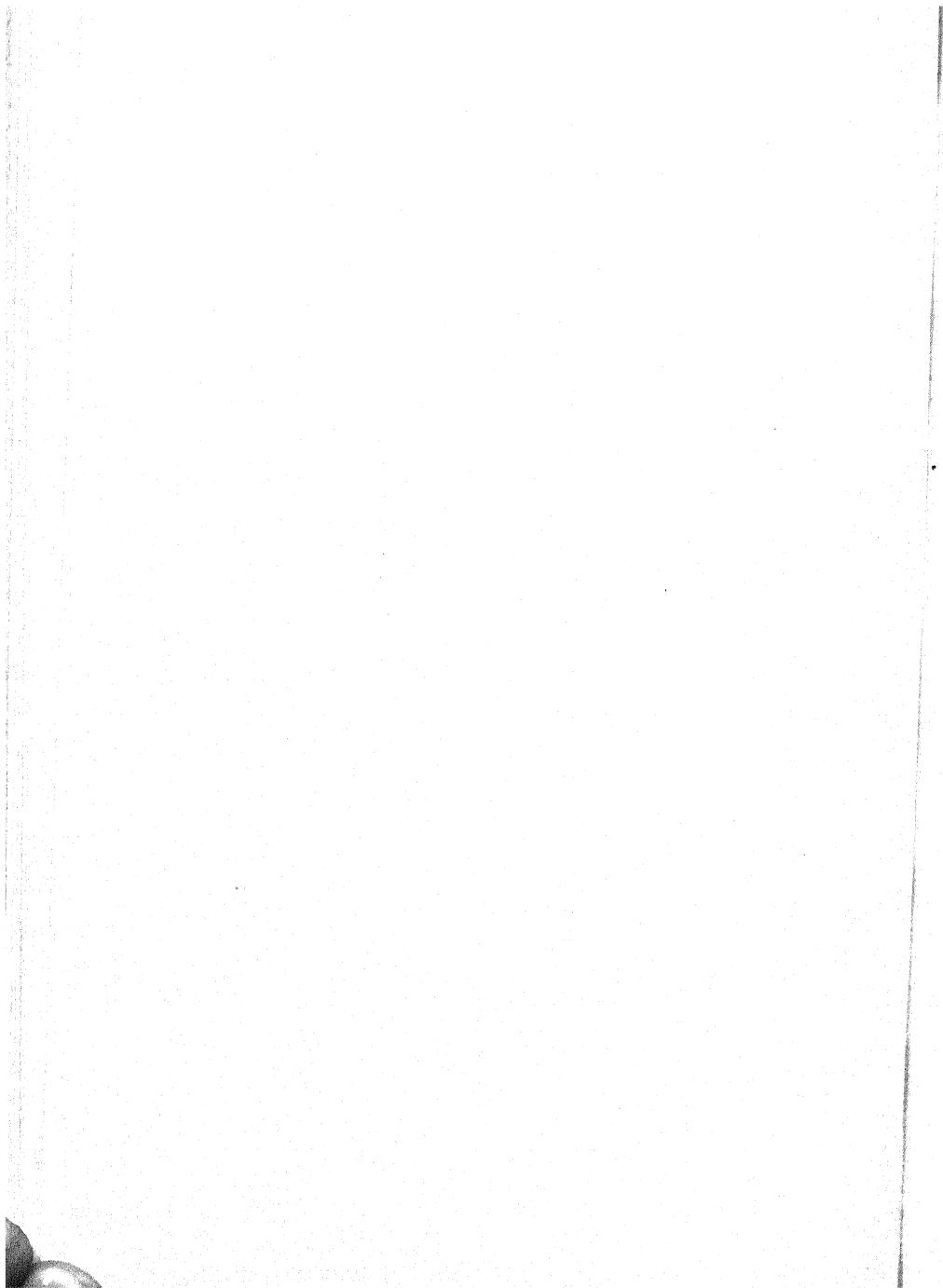
Is not all this something to the credit of the missionaries, dear critic? (I don't speak of other schools of a more ambitious kind, and of Dr Keskar's leper asylum, which I did not see.) Here are new trades taught to boys, trades that will make them self-supporting in a very short time, and that are quite in the line of the historic crafts of India. And here are schools for girl-children, where they may be happy, and learn, besides reading and writing, the art of lace-making and other feminine arts. Now, before the missionaries came, what was the lot of these children? I suppose it was not unlike the lot of neglected children at home; possibly, in the case of the girls, very much worse. Here, then, is a justification of missions. They bring "sweetness and light" into innumerable young lives in India. You do not agree with missionary theology? Perhaps not. Few of us do. But I think I believe in "sweetness and light." . . . The days at Sholapur sped pleasantly, and too swiftly. This little bit of America in India (and another little bit at Ahmednagar later on) had all the piquancy of a new sensation.

Here were men and women who happened to be missionaries, but who enjoyed life, and made others enjoy it; who were as cultivated as any society I know in England, and much more lively; who did their daily work with a certain cheerfulness, gaiety, almost, that was infectious. No doubt that work was interesting, fascinating. But disease and famine and death have to be fought at Sholapur, and at Ahmednagar—as elsewhere in India—often, too often; and I can quite imagine the Americans fighting them with the same gay, courageous spirit as they carry into the common work of every day. The time sped pleasantly. I remember those evenings after dinner, when the piano was set a-going, and we had music and song till the hour for bed. It was near to Christmas, so we had *The Messiah* (“Hallelujah Chorus,” and all), and made believe to be a choir of a thousand voices. *Forsan et haec*: you know the rest.

At Sholapur I interviewed my first and last holy man. The interview was necessarily short; for the holy man knew no English, and I had no Marathi, which was, I believe, the language of the holy one. My friend and interpreter spoke Marathi, it is true; but his



A GUARDIAN OF THE FORT.



Marathi and that of the holy man seemed different, somehow: there were mutual misunderstandings; so the interview was brief. But the great thing is that I have actually seen and spoken to a holy man of the East. I had been anxious to do so for quite a long time; indeed, ever since I had heard Mrs Besant lecture upon him at the Hampstead Conservatoire. Mrs Besant had excited my curiosity. She had painted in glowing terms the excellences of these holy ones: their physical, moral, psychical, and spiritual excellences. They trained for the life from early manhood. They ate only "rhythmic" food; they abjured the pleasures of the body; they avoided the society of ladies. Mentally, they cultivated psychic powers by practices of concentration, and chiefly by staring at black spots on the wall while they squatted on the floor. Thus the holy men became holy. Thus they acquired the Way. I remember that the fashionable audience at the Conservatoire (ladies, for the most part) seemed fascinated by this picture of the higher life, and no doubt made good resolutions as to the consumption of rhythmic food, and as to the gazing at spots on the wall from a sedentary

position. (I thought of suggesting "spot gazing" as a new society hobby.) My curiosity, I say, was aroused. When I came to India I immediately began to look out for the holy men. Sometimes there would pass me on the road a strange, nearly nude figure, with long matted hair, and eyes that glared; with one hand grasping a staff, and the other, stiff and withered, held high above the head. This, I knew, was a religious mendicant. I often wished to interview him. Such an one must, in spite of his strangeness to Western eyes, be a sincere man; must have seen visions and dreamed realms of truth; must have had some splendidly vital theory of the universe which sustained him through the severest physical tortures. (I know Canon X—— would not agree with me. He would speak of "degrading superstitions," and "disgusting practices." Very well; but will Canon X—— prove his belief in his own religion by tests as convincing as the poor fakir's? I don't ask him to hold up his shapely hand above his head till the limb withers, or to suspend his person upon sharp iron hooks for an indefinite time; but some simple act of self-abnegation, some simple denial of the pleasures of the body: one course less at dinner, or a substitution of

ginger beer for that exquisitely flavoured French wine. . . . "My religion," replies the Canon pompously, "requires none of these sacrifices. It requires nothing but faith." So the worthy Canon goes on making the best of both worlds.) But I never succeeded in interviewing a fakir. On this morning at Sholapur we went out cycling before the sun was hot. Soon we came to a little Hindu shrine by the wayside. It was but a toy temple, within which one caught sight of a weird-looking deity smudged with red paint. We descended from our cycles, and entered the outer porch. Then we saw the holy man.

He was seated on a stone bench, with legs crossed tailor-fashion, and reading intently. As we entered, he looked up and smiled, not in the least resenting our intrusion. Though clean, he was not attractive. His hair was long and straggling; his nails were like bird's claws; he had a general air of untidiness.

"Who are you?" I asked, through my friend.

"I am a Sadhu."

The reply came promptly, as if cross-examination was not displeasing to him.

"And what is a Sadhu?"

"A Sadhu is a holy man. He walks from

place to place. He has no home. He lives on charity."

"What do you read, Sadhu?"

"The Bhagavad Gita." The Sadhu fingered the book lovingly.

The Bhagavad Gita! This was interesting. I had often seen translations of this philosophical poem—taken from the great Hindu epic—the Mahâbhârata—had read it in snatches; had heard theosophists of the West refer to it in terms of reverential awe. And here it was in the hands of a Sadhu in a Hindu wayside shrine.

"May I see it?"

The Sadhu hesitated. Clearly he did not wish to part with it. Then he did a curious thing. He closed the book and put it down on the bench beside him. I guessed his reason: he would not give me the book direct lest he should be contaminated. I took it up from the bench and examined it curiously. It was printed in the beautiful Marathi character. Alas, I had the greatest philosophical poem in the world in my hand, and I was unable to read it!

But I have it in my hand now, translated, and one might speculate as to what particular moral or spiritual benefit the Sadhu by

the wayside derived from it. It teaches no startling doctrine, nothing new or (so far as ethics are concerned) unfamiliar to us of the West. Commonplaces abound (no doubt the commonplaceness is due to the translator): the certainty of death, the permanence of the soul, the supremacy of duty. Stoicism for this life, reincarnation for the lives to come: these two seem to be the chief notes of the poem:

"The man whom these torment not, O chief of men, balanced in pain and pleasure, steadfast, he is for immortality. . . ."

"He is not born, nor doth he die; nor having been, ceaseth he any more to be; unborn perpetual, eternal, and ancient, he is not slain when the body is slaughtered. . . ."

"For certain is death to the born, and certain is birth for the dead; therefore, over the inevitable thou should'st not grieve. . . ."

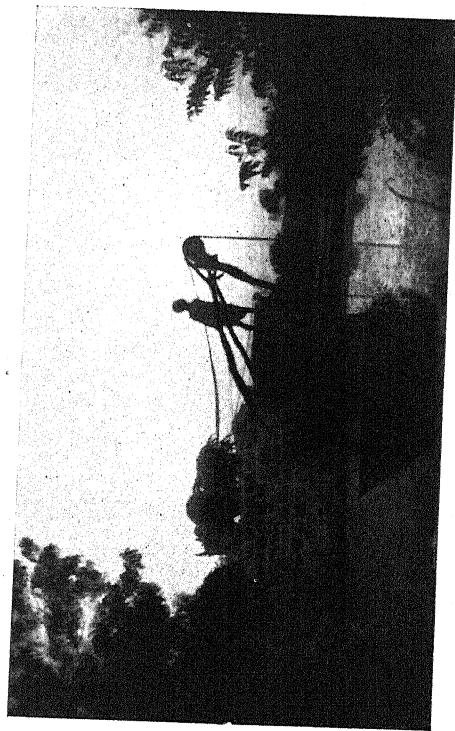
As I turned the leaves idly there came out from the interior of the temple a creature who looked like a woman. Her long hair swept down to her shoulders. She had been washing her hands, and stood rubbing the water from them as she gazed at the strangers.

"And who is this?" I asked.

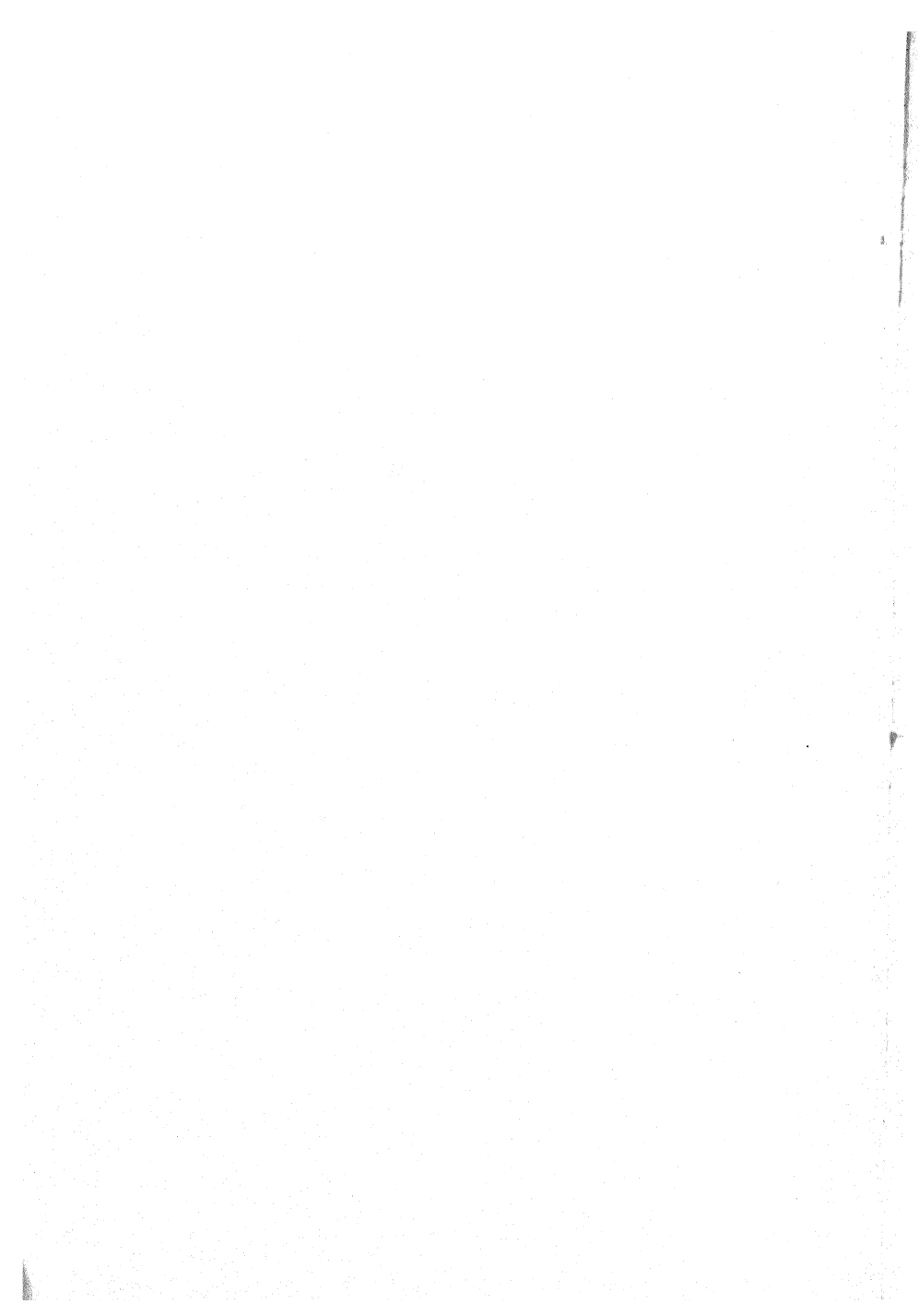
"A yogi," replied the Sadhu.

So here was another holy person : perhaps a disciple of the Sadhu : certainly a seeker after the Way. Much as I should have liked to extract information from the Sadhu and the yogi, it was impossible. There was the barrier of language. I replaced the Bhagavad Gita on the stone bench, and went sadly away.

One more scene at Sholapur recurs to me. We had left the bungalow at 5 A.M. on a shooting expedition. Quite near the town, out on the level plains where rice and grain-crops grow, the wild deer roam and are (occasionally) hunted by the white man. We drive along in darkness and silence under the cold stars, I pondering on the curious fate that armed me, a Cockney, with a rifle, and sent me out to stalk deer on the Deccan in the darkness of a winter's morning. At this hour the dusty roads were absolutely deserted ; but as we drew near the town, although it was still early and still dark, a stir of life was apparent. Ghostly figures shrouded in long shawls or blankets started up from the darkness, and melted again into it as our tonga rattled past. We entered the narrow streets of the native town. Suddenly there was a



EVENING AT SHOLAPUR,



great flare of light. We were in the street of blacksmiths. Every shop was a smithy, and every smithy had a blazing fire, with an attendant circle of semi-nude figures. The figures stretched out ghostly arms and warmed ghostly hands at the fires; or watched other figures (ghostly) hammer glowing metal just as our substantial smiths do at home. This was the scene that stamped itself on my memory. It was like a wild dream of William Blake's, or the more ordered imagining of Gustave Doré, or anything in the Dantesque way that occurs to you.

. . . And the deer? Oh well, their number in the Deccan was not diminished that morning. I have reason to believe that they enjoyed the spectacle of a weary and warm Cockney sportsman endeavouring to stalk them on their native plains. Certainly they always succeeded in keeping just out of range, and they did it with an air of fine, premeditated calculation. The Cockney sportsman was legitimately annoyed. At length he desisted; turned his back on the deer and on the sun, and tramped wearily across the plain to a white spot on the horizon, which was the waiting tonga.

APPENDIX VI

TRAVELLERS AND THE SADHU

TRAVELLERS from the West have always been attracted by, and puzzled by, the Indian ascetics. Of all the white men who journeyed in the East during the seventeenth century, perhaps M. Tavernier, the French jeweller, was (with the possible exception of his compatriot and contemporary François Bernier) the most curious, lively, and exact. This is a good deal to say; for, although we boast of modern travel and its "facilities," modern travel did not discover Persia or India. Many white men thoroughly explored these countries in Stuart times, observed adequately, and published copious diaries of their travels. M. Tavernier was one of these. He was born, he tells us, with a passion for travel. At an early age he gratified this by wandering through practically all the countries of Europe, beginning with England. Then he sighed for other worlds to conquer, and attacked the East. He set out from Constantinople, journeyed through Asiatic Turkey and Persia, and reached India. This was at the time when, in England,

the Civil Wars were raging, and when, in India, Aurungzebe occupied the throne of the Great Mogul. Tavernier's Indian experiences are worth reading; but at the moment we are only concerned with his observations on the ascetics. He first notices the "faquirs," or "poor Mohammedan volunteers." "They reckon," says he, "that there are in India 800,000 faquirs and 1,200,000 idolators; which is a prodigious number. They are all of them Vagabonds and lazy Drones, that dazle the eyes of the people with a false zeal, and make them believe that whatever comes out of their mouths is an Oracle. . . . The one sort go almost naked like the idolators, faquirs having no certain abode in the world, but giving themselves up to all manner of uncleanness. . . . [The leader] draws after him a great iron chain, which is ty'd to his leg, and is about two ells long and proportionately thick. When he says his prayers, he does it with a loud voice, and ratling his chain all the while, which is accompanied with an affected Gravity, that draws the Veneration of the people. . . ." These Mohammedan faquirs, no doubt, originally learned their business from the Hindus. It is to be feared also that they did so for commercial reasons, and not for any spiritual benefit they derived from it. Tavernier thought them humbugs, and observed that the people of the country were very

much afraid of them. They were imperious beggars. On one occasion a group of them "warned off" Tavernier himself from a pitch of theirs. The Frenchman promptly moved away. Tavernier is a little more sympathetic with the "poor volunteers among the Indians." "These faquirs wander generally in troops, every one of which has a superior. And in regard they are quite naked, winter and summer lying upon the ground. . . . The Crews of Faquirs many times joyn together to go in Pilgrimage to the Principal Pagods and Public Washings which they use upon certain days in the year in the River Ganges, whereof they make the chiefest account. . . . Some of the most austere Faquirs live in little pittiful Huts neer their Pagods, where they have once in twenty-four hours something to eat bestowed upon them for God's sake. . . ." He then describes and gives an illustrative sketch of the various "penances," such as holding up the arms, swinging on hooks, etc., with which we are familiar. On the whole, our jeweller had no great opinion of the "Faquirs."

François Bernier also travelled in the East about this time. Like Tavernier (and most other people), he published a full account of his travels. Both Bernier's book and Tavernier's were translated into English and issued (in folio) as "A Collection of Travels" by a London publisher in 1684. These two French-

men met in India and journeyed together for a time: two gay vagabonds; caustic and shrewd observers of things. Bernier devotes a good deal of space to the "faquirs." "Amongst that vast number and great crowd of Faquirs, Dervishes, or religious Heathens in the Indies there is abundance of them that have Convents in which there are Superiors, and where they make certain vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, leading so odd a Life that I doubt whether you can give credit to it. These are commonly called *Jainquis*, as if you should say, United to God. . . . Their arms were small and long as of hectic persons, because they took not sufficient nourishment in that forced posture, and they could not let them down to take anything with them, either meat or drink. . . . There is no Megæra in hell so terrible to look on as those men are, all naked with their black skin, long hair, dried arms, and in the posture mentioned, with crooked nails." "I have often met on the field, specially upon the lands of the Rajas, whole squadrons of these faquirs, altogether naked, dreadful to behold. . . . I saw them pass thus quite naked without any shame through the midst of a crowded burrough. I admired how men, women, and children could look upon them so indifferently, without being moved on more than if we should see pass some Eremite through our streets." The only comment the

modern traveller makes on this is that nowadays the Sadhu clothes himself at least sufficiently to meet the somewhat exiguous requirements of decency according to India. The simple mind of Bernier found the ascetics difficult to explain. "All these extraordinary things did, to tell the truth, exceedingly surprise me. At first I knew not what to say or think of it. Sometimes I looked upon them as a remainder, or rather as the Authors of that antient and infamous sect of the Cynicks, but only that I found nothing in them but brutality and ignorance; and then they seemed to me a kind of Trees, somewhat moving from one place to another, rather than rational animals. Another time I considered them as men altogether enthusiastical, though, as I lately said, I could not find any shadow of true piety in all they did. Sometimes I imagined that in Vanity, which creeps in everywhere, which is as often found under the patched mantle of Diogenes as under the comely garment of Plato, there might lurk that spring which might set a-going so many engins, and then reflecting withal upon the miserable or austere life they led, I knew not what judgment to make of them." Perhaps, says Bernier, they have "hopes of becoming Rajas" in their next incarnation. "But," he goes on, "as I have often told them to their faces, how is it possible for any man to resolve

upon such a miserable life from the hope of another that is to be no longer, and hath also in the upshot but very little happiness in it though one should return a Raja? . . . There must needs, said I, lie something else under it which you have no mind to discover to us, or you must be arrant fools!" There was indeed probably "something else"; but the spectacle of the worthy French doctor gravely lecturing the unclad (and uncomprehending) ascetics upon the folly of wishing to become "Rajas," was surely richly comic. One would give a good deal to have heard the subsequent remarks of the ascetics. It must be said, however, that the modern traveller is on this point little less idiotic than Bernier.

Bernier (again like the modern traveller) was chiefly curious to know whether these men could work the wonders with which popular rumour credited them. He was sceptical, and remained so. "They divine what one thinketh: make the branch of a tree blossom and bear fruit in less than an hour; hatch eggs in their bosom in less than half a quarter of an hour, and bring forth such birds as you demand, which they make fly about the chamber, and many such other prodigies. I mean if what is said of them be true. For I remember that one day my agah sent for one of these famous diviners; and when he was come, agreed to give him the next day 300 Roupies, which is about

150 crowns, if he should tell him, as he said he would, his present thought, which he was to write before him upon a paper; as also that I myself made a bargain with the same to give him 25 Roupies if he should divine mine; but the prophet failed us, as also did another time one of these pretended producers of prodigies, to whom I had also promised 20 Roupies. I am still to be understood if it be true what is said of them. For as for me, I am, with all my curiosity, none of those happy men that are present at and see those great feats; and if I should chance to see any of such things as are thought strange, I am always considering and seeking whether the thing may not be done by some juggle, art, or trick of legerdemain; and I am sometimes even so unhappy, or if you will, so fortunate, as to find out the cheat, as I did him that made the cup run to discover who it was that had stolen money from my Agah." By which the reader will see that François Bernier had both a sense of humour and the genuine scientific spirit.

Travellers from the West in India are not as a rule much concerned about the ideals of the Sadhus or other ascetics of that country. The average man sets them down as eccentric impostors. What he is curious about, however, is whether the Sadhu or the fakir can really perform the miracles with which popular

opinion in India has always credited them. On this point the Englishman gets little satisfaction. He himself never sees the "great feats": they are always just in the next district. Occasionally he meets a man who "knows somebody" who has actually seen something astonishing; but the enquirer never gets closer to the miracle than that. It is curious that during all our occupation of India, there is (so far as I know) no well authenticated instance of a "miracle" performed by a fakir which could not be better performed by one of our own Western conjurers. (A possible exception is the so-called "burial alive" of the fakirs, which apparently was seen by Englishmen in India in the olden days. R. L. Stevenson uses the idea, of course, in "The Master of Ballantrae.") Mr Campbell Oman, in his book on the Ascetics of India, can only give us some tricks with champagne bottles, which smack very much of Maskelyne & Cooke. In addition to that we have the Max Nordau School, who tell us that all the so-called esoteric marvels of the ascetics—their "blending with the Universal All" and their soul-journeys—are but phenomena of a diseased nervous system: conditions of self-hypnotism, easily adduced and easily accounted for. Wherefore the average man dismisses the whole subject as an imposture.

There is, however, something to be said on

the other side. Believers in the holy men will tell you that it is not surprising that the Englishman sees nothing of the miraculous in India. Why should the fakir or the Sadhu "show off" to gratify a vulgar curiosity? He keeps his marvels for the truly reverent. Again (say the believers) the West has for some centuries been wedded to materialism. It has believed in nothing but the multiplication table, and in similar inspired dogmas. It is now beginning to see that matter is not everything: in fact, that it is nothing, save a whirl of non-substantial electrons: let us say, an illusion of the senses. We tremble on the confines of vast spiritual discoveries. Now (I still quote the believers) is it not just possible that men who have pondered these mysteries for thousands of years may have attained a certain illumination as yet denied to us of the West? Is it not conceivable that some of these men are enabled to join themselves to the stream of spiritual power which, as you of the West are beginning to admit, sweeps through the universe?

On this matter the truly wise man will hold his judgment in suspense: always remembering that it is not the mark of the enlightened mind to laugh out of court any widespread belief, however *prima facie* absurd.

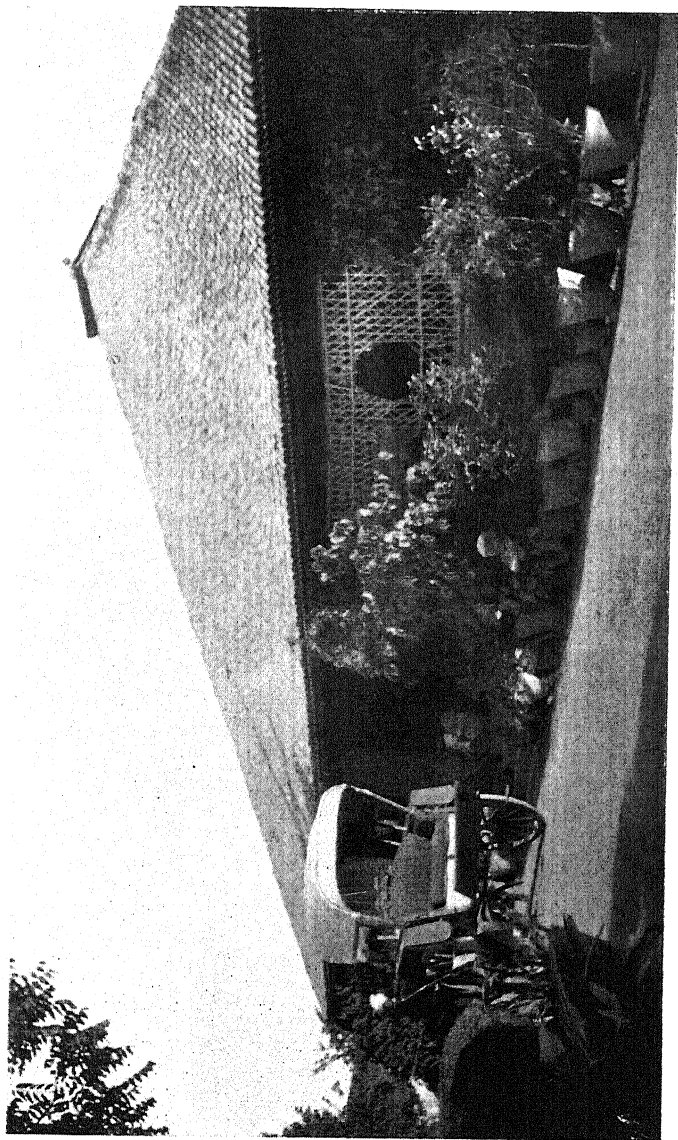
CHAPTER XII

THE CITY OF CHAND BIBI

THERE was once a Cambridge don who made a "cold weather" journey to India. While in India he stayed with high-up people — very high-up people indeed. When he came home he wrote a book. From this book it would appear that though the don enjoyed himself immensely with the high-up people, his soul was not quite satisfied with Anglo-Indians as a class. It is true that he admired them. There never was such a government since the world began. Absolutism, administered by Englishmen, was delightful. The don longed to be a native (a *bhisti*, or water-carrier, for choice), just to feel the joy of being governed by high-up people from England. But there was a fly in the pot. Anglo-Indians, though able administrators, were lacking in "culture." (I had thought the word obsolete, but it still apparently

lingers in academic circles.) "Culture," wrote the don sadly, if inelegantly, "is not their strong point." The gentle soul of the don was grieved.

The donnish dictum (which is not untrue), recurs to me when I write of Ahmednagar. I do not quite know why it should, except that my most pleasant reminiscence of 'Nagar is the reminiscence of a bungalow where, I am sure, the don would have found that "culture" which his soul loveth. It was a bungalow where you saw all the latest books, all the "literary" periodicals, where pictures were, and music, and good talk on many subjects, from Mr Roosevelt's strenuous life to the heroical exploits of Chand Bibi. I do not forget those calm, still nights when we sat on the verandah and discussed these things, while the music (Chopin, perhaps, or Chaminade) floated out into the darkness. But service, dear don, is better even than culture. And this was one of a series of bungalows where the things of the spirit were not (as at Cambridge and other places) merely interesting subjects of conversation brought out for the benefit of visitors, but



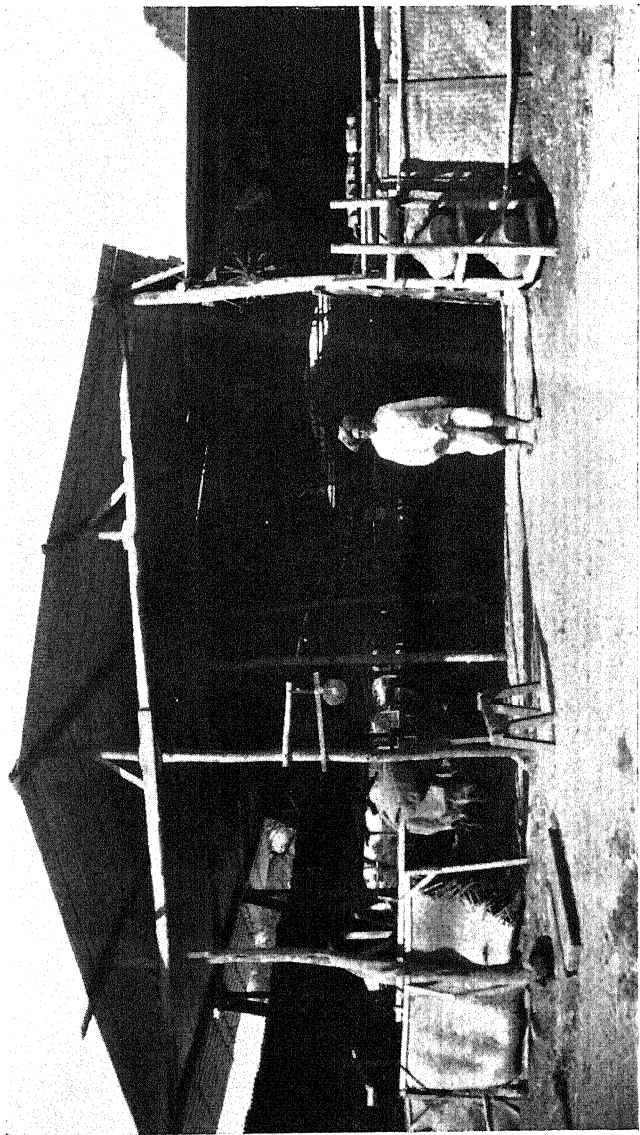
"ONE OF A SERIES OF BUNGALOWS."



were in the way to become everyday realities. Another mission bungalow . . . Yes: I am sadly unfashionable. Did the Cambridge don visit any mission stations? (H'm! "Society in India is punctilious, and the observance of social rules is more strictly enforced than with us." That does not look quite like it. Did Mrs —— [Authoress of "Joseph Purple, M.P.," "The Forcing-House for Sinners," and other tales] patronise mission bungalows? She, too, wrote a book about India. I notice that she travelled with "forty-seven tons of dresses and uniforms" —and a party who were so cultivated that they were never in the least bored with each other. I don't think the forty-seven tons of millinery ever went near a mission station.) . . . The American Mission at 'Nagar is one of the most flourishing in India. Schools, churches, carpet and rug factories, lace-making: they are all here, and all prosperous. Not that they have no difficulties. On the contrary, there is a continuous lack of capital to extend the industrial side of the mission; and if any charitably-disposed person has more money than he or she well knows what

to do with, he or she might do worse than send some of the surplus to the American Mission at Ahmednagar.

'Nuggar—I spell it as it is pronounced—is a typical enough native town, and I should like to have been accompanied by the don from Cambridge in my ramble through it. (I can't keep this gentleman out of my memorial: he seems to me to point quite a number of morals.) I observe that he declines to say anything about the natives, because he had no opportunity of judging them or of cultivating their acquaintance. "They seem very well treated by their English masters." Mark the detached attitude of the don. Now, I hold that an Englishman has no right to spend time in India and come away without having ever once troubled to see how the natives of India live: no *right*. It is no doubt exceedingly agreeable to stay with the governing class: to drive out and receive courteous salaams from those curious brown people in the streets; but surely there is a positive moral obligation on the white man who governs to see with his own eyes how the governed brown men live—what they eat and drink, what kind of houses they inhabit,



A WORKSHOP AT THE AMERICAN MISSION, AHMEDNAGAR.

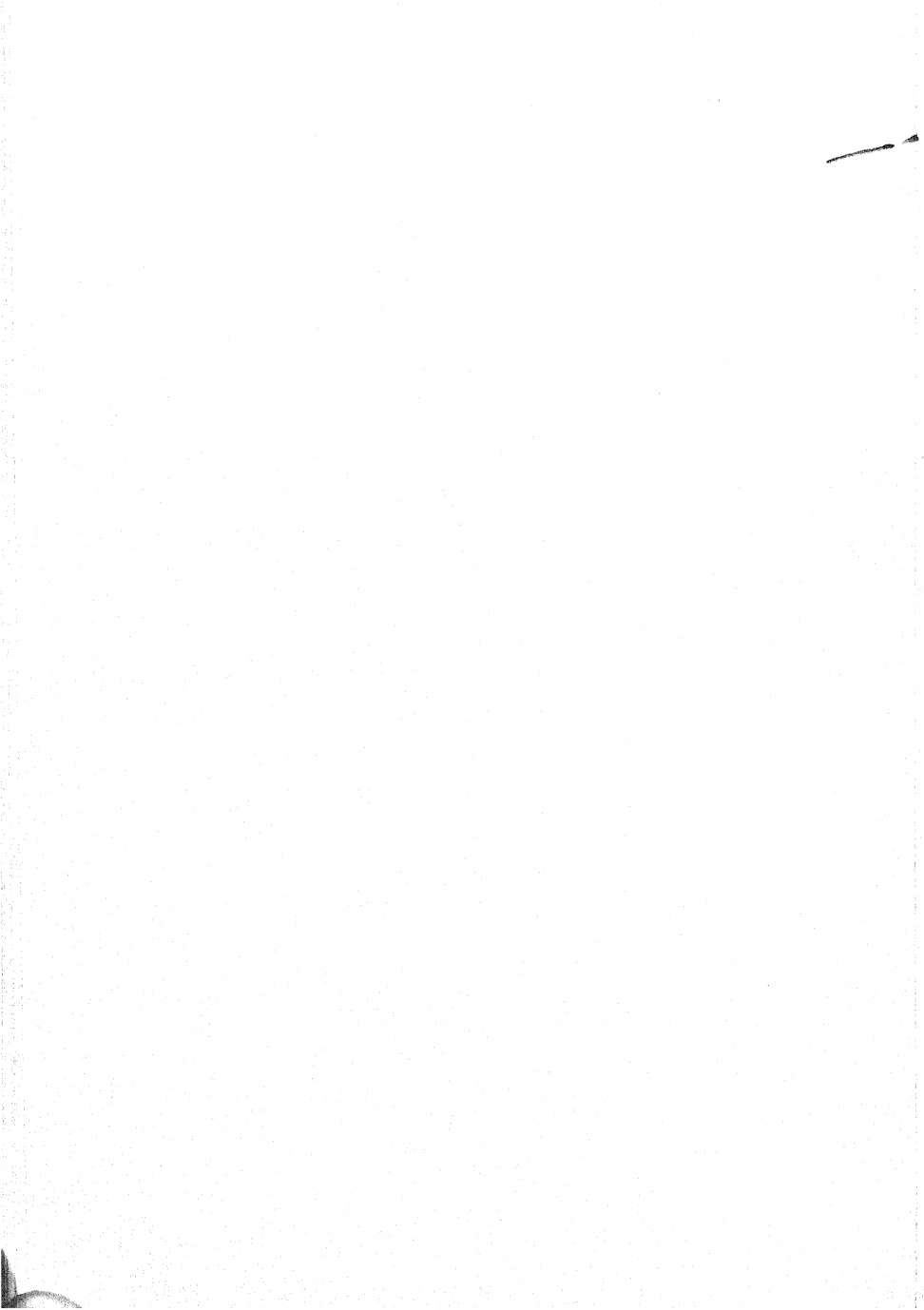


what they work at, what they worship? Otherwise, proper government is impossible. Besides, isn't it just a little futile to change the sky and give the mind no opportunity of changing; to carry a little English environment about with you (buttressed, perhaps, by forty-seven tons of millinery), and never once break through it into the larger world? Supposing the don had come with us through the town of 'Nuggar on that morning, he would have seen a good many interesting things. 'Nuggar is a city of weavers. Here is a street almost entirely given up to the weaving caste. Out on the open space before the houses you will see the women doing their share of the work: spreading out the dyed yarn in the sun to dry; stretching out the threads in readiness for the loom, and picking out every thread separately from its neighbour. From the doors and windows round us comes the steady click, click of many looms. We enter a house—a house of one apartment in which weaving, eating and sleeping are all carried on at their appointed times. Here is the family loom: an instrument in which there is not a single part

incapable of being made, and not actually made, by hand. Such a loom has been used in India from time immemorial, and I trust will be used, despite modern machinery, until time and looms are no more. At 'Nuggar the weavers chiefly manufacture women's dresses—*sàris*; they are famous for these. Right interesting it is to watch the cloth grow under the hand of the weaver, thread by thread, and to see how he works the cunning little herring-bone pattern at the side; far more interesting than to wander through a Lancashire factory, and observe the dull, mechanical power-looms grinding out their tale of cloth. Hand-weaving requires infinite patience, and time unlimited. Surely, then, it is the ideal craft for the East, where both these obtain. But 'Nuggar has other crafts and other pursuits. We wander through the street of the makers of brass and copper vessels, through the bázár where the sellers of grain and of sweetmeats congregate, where the money-changers sit cross-legged and ply *their* avocation. Here is a barber at work, scraping the chin of a customer *coram publico*; here a benevolent patriarch, selling sweet-



IN THE MISSION COMPOUND, AHMEDNAGAR.



meats to children and taking in exchange not money, but cowries. It is a bustling, gay, kaleidoscopic scene.

We talk of Caste:—

AUTHOR.—“Curious that one doesn’t seem to notice Caste in operation, somehow.”

MAN OF 'NUGGAR.—“Well, I suppose that’s because it runs like a well-oiled machine: no jolting or jarring, but working smoothly all the time.”

AUTHOR.—“Dilate.”

M. N.—“We have been looking at the weavers. Remember that each trade has its own caste. Your father was a weaver: you therefore are a weaver; your son will be a weaver; your remote descendants will never do anything but weave. You may wish to scrape chins, or to sell grain in the bázár: but you will wish in vain. You are predestined to be a weaver: and Caste will see to it that you weave.”

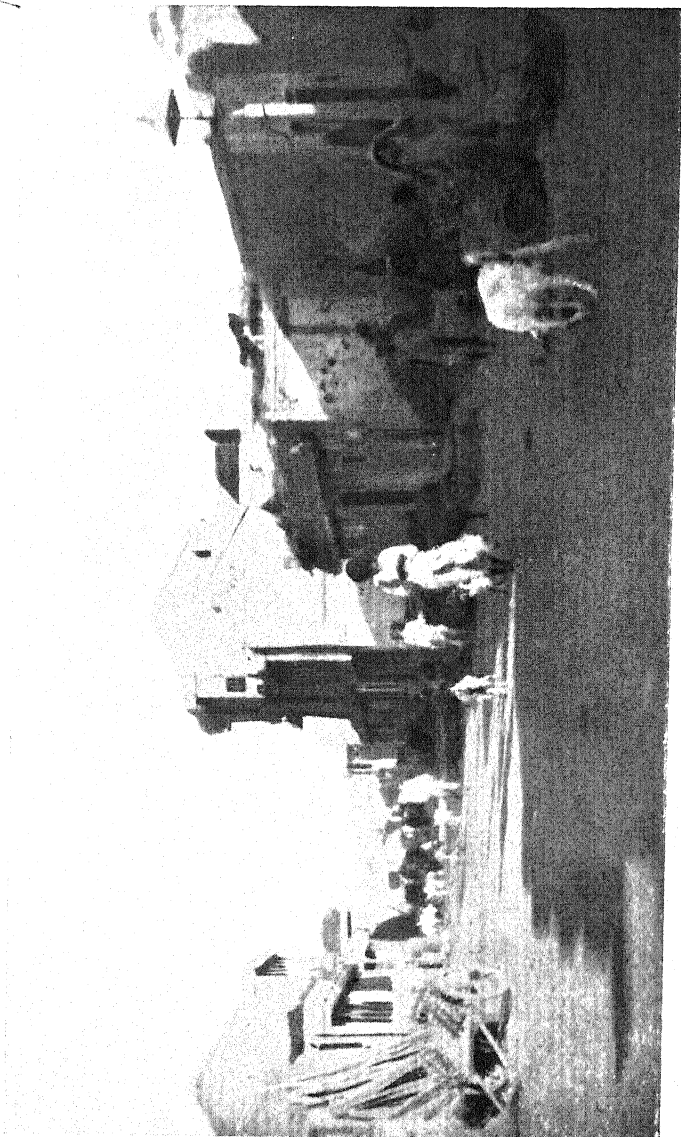
AUTHOR.—“So!”

M. N.—“Regard the grain shops, the sellers of eatables. They must all be of high caste. Why? Because no respectable person would buy food from a low-caste man. Regard this

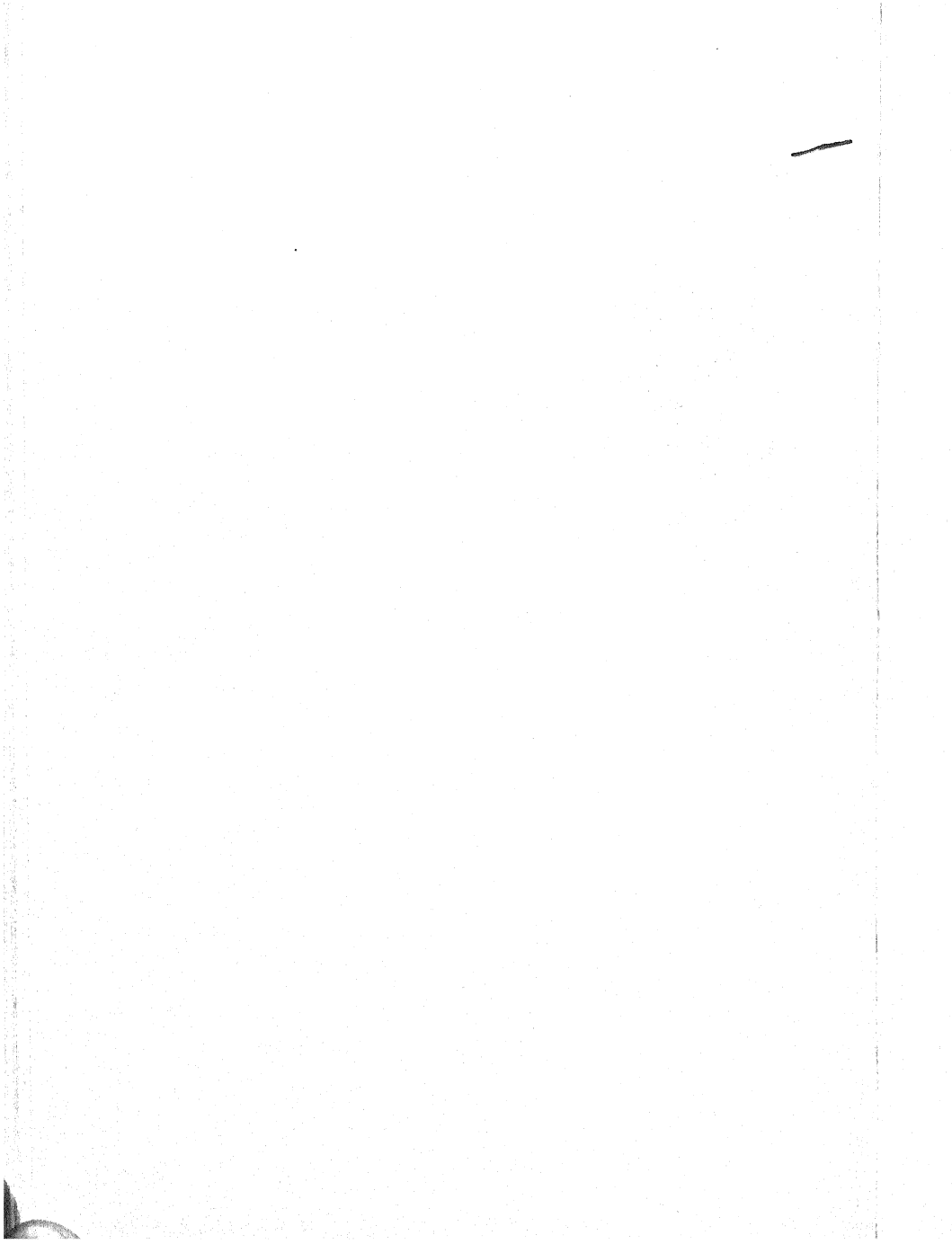
young woman with a jar of water on her head. She pauses at the end of the narrow alley. Why? She sees the Sahibs coming. She must not brush against them in the narrow path while she carries water; else must she go back to the well, empty her pitcher, and refill it. Naturally she doesn't want to do that: hence she pauses. Caste again. Regard yon water-tap where the people drink. There is no drinking vessel: for who would drink from a vessel which had been touched by the lips of a low-caste man?"

AUTHOR.—"There is some excellent sense in the Caste idea."

M. N.—"Certainly. Caste in its beginning was reasonable. Many of its rules as to contamination by touch were excellent from a sanitary point of view. Trade castes were but our Western trade guilds. But 'Usage which is reasonable begets usage which is unreasonable,' as Sir Henry Maine has said. The 'unreasonable' soon developed in India. And now Caste, with its thousand and one senseless regulations and petty observances, is the curse of India."



A STREET IN AHMEDNAGAR.



AUTHOR.—“We have caste at home, too.”

M. N.—“Oh yes; but not worked out so logically, so cruelly.”

AUTHOR.—“Give our upper-caste people at home a chance of working it out, and wouldn't they take it—just!”

M. N.—“Perhaps. I am only dealing with the fact in India.”

AUTHOR.—“I dislike caste at home and abroad.”

And so I do. In which I differ from my Cambridge friend (who must point one more moral), who has “a great admiration for caste.” Of course, he knows nothing about its operation in India—not having had “the opportunity”—but the idea appeals to him. It appeals to a good many of us. Splendid to be a Brahmin with a fair skin, and to get all the plums and privileges of this life! Yes, my friends: when we admire the caste idea, is there not always the mental implication that *we ourselves would, of course, belong to a superior caste?* It does not seem quite pleasant to think of being born into a debased caste. Similarly the Carlylean theory of society is attractive: always provided that

we are of the Strong Men. "Put collars on their necks." Certainly: but let us do the putting, please. . . . "Caste keeps a man contented and finds him occupation, also jealously guards his conduct." I daresay. And if you regard the automaton as a suitable ideal for the soaring human soul, that sentence would naturally conclude the matter in your mind, and I should only refer you, in a despairing way, to "The Stones of Venice," and other works by the late Mr Ruskin, where you will find this ideal, and persons professing it, properly dealt with in language of glowing rhetoric. But if you think that "keeping a man contented" is not necessarily a beautiful and virtuous thing, you will possibly have a different opinion of caste from that of the cited don.

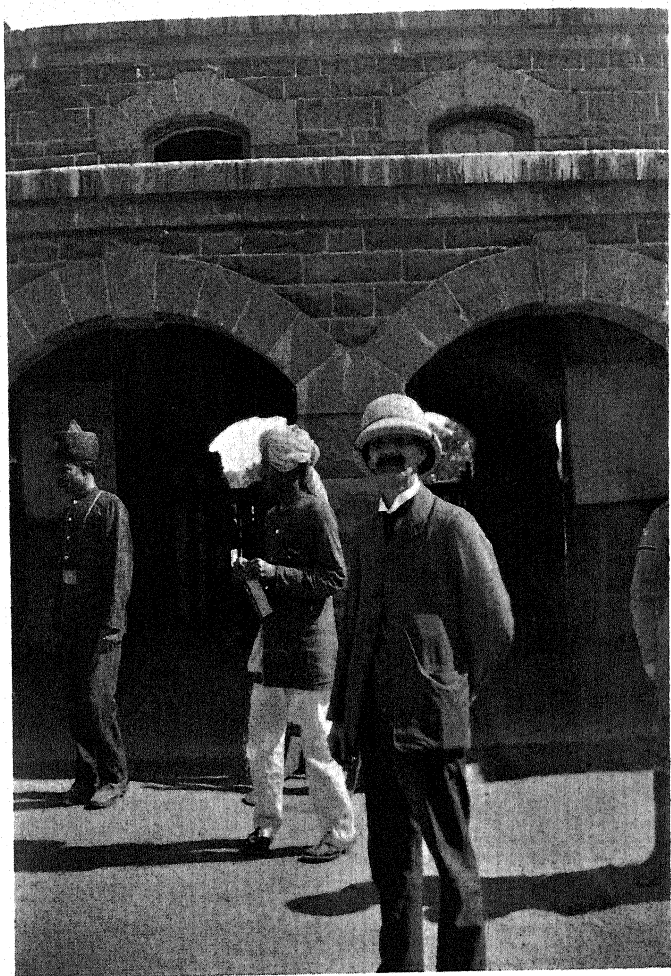
I have said that 'Nuggar is the city of Chand Bibi. Here that strenuous and heroic queen held at bay the invading forces of the Moguls from Delhi. They tell many stories of her in the place—mostly apocryphal. For my part, I think that the simple language of the chronicler, depicting her at the supreme moment of her life, is more impressive than

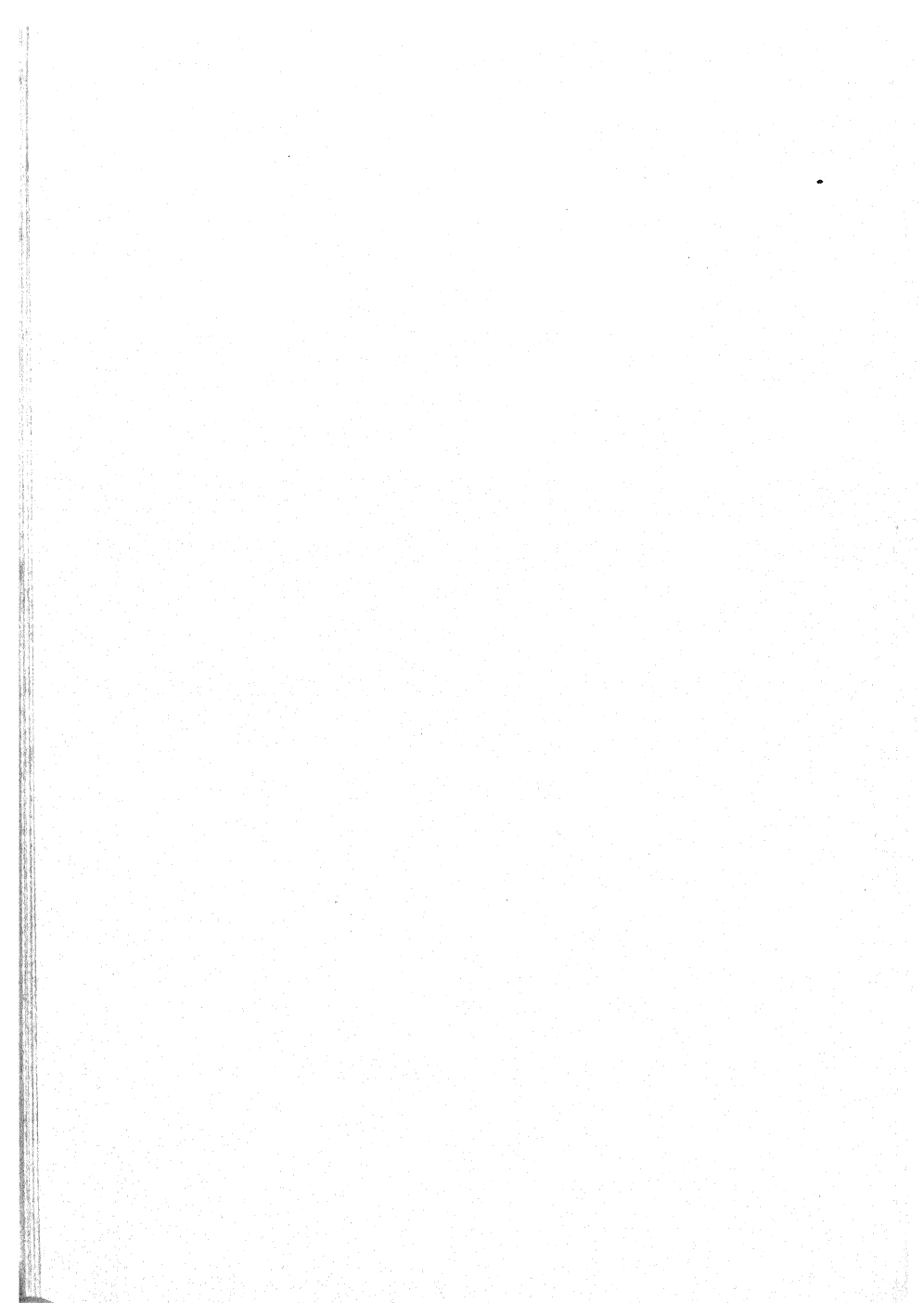
any of these fabulous tales. The Moguls, besieging the city, had exploded three mines. "*The third mine,*" says the historian, "*created a wide breach, and Chand Bibi rushed to defend it in full armour, a naked sword in her hand, and a veil over her face.*" As a result, the defenders of the city rallied, and beat back the Moguls. Yet Chand Bibi, who saved her city, was unable to save herself. Four years after she had so gallantly filled the breach in the wall, the Moguls once more made a dash for 'Nuggar. Again the queen met them, this time not offering them battle, but holding out the olive branch of peace. A peace, not shameful, was about to be concluded, when Chand Bibi was treacherously killed by her own soldiers. It is gratifying to be able to add that they did not profit by their treason. The Moguls, hearing that the queen was dead, burst into the fort, and put the defenders to the sword, giving no quarter. I don't think Ahmednagar ever recovered from the death of Chand Bibi, nor will it ever wipe away that stain. After the local Mohammedan kings, and after the Moguls, came the Mahrattas; and after the

Mahrattas came General Wellesley (not then Duke of Wellington), who took the fort—and apparently sat under a tree, which remains to this day. The British red-coats are still at the fort, and are likely to stay there for some time. A year or two back came the Boer prisoners, who seem to have enjoyed themselves as well as exiles (on parole) may. The country round 'Nuggar is a fair, breezy upland, with an English look about it in places. It is not a bad country for exiles.

.

Down at the American bungalow the sun shone hotly. It was Sunday afternoon. I sat in the verandah, dozing. Suddenly some one came up the steps. It was our friend the dāk-wollah, with letters. He deposited a bundle by my side: letters from home—one, two, three, four, five! He went away. Across the compound drifted the clear voices of children, singing hymns to old, well-remembered tunes. I heard the footsteps of the dāk-wollah die in the distance. A little grey squirrel ran down from the roof of the verandah, and stared at me, unabashed. I opened my letters, and began to read.





CHAPTER XIII

CHRISTMAS DAY

THE night had been very hot—a real Bombay night, when you grudge even the mosquito-net (because you imagine it excludes the air), and when a sheet becomes a burden. I had slept but moderately well. Morning came with suddenness, and I was glad. And morning brought Abdul, with chota hazri, which made me more glad. He put down the tea at my bedside, and rolled up the mosquito curtain. The sun was already shining brilliantly over the waters of the bay.

“Tea ready,” said Abdul, standing at attention.

I sat up in bed lazily.

“Abdul,” I said, “do you know what day this is?”

ABDUL (*after a pause*).—“Sun-day, sir.”

AUTHOR.—“Yes; and Christmas Day, too.”

ABDUL (*salaaming low*).—“That is a good day, sir.”

AUTHOR (*with a sigh*).—"Yes, a good day (*pours out tea*). In England they are still asleep. But in a few hours they will waken up, and the children will look in their stockings for the gifts of Santa Claus."

ABDUL—"Santaclaus. Yes, sir."

AUTHOR (*munching toast*).—"Precisely. And the elders will all say that Christmas isn't what it used to be in their young days. What snowy Christmases they had, to be sure! Of course it *may* snow in England to-day, but I think not. It will rain."

ABDUL—"The English rainy season—kik."

AUTHOR—"Yes. Then they will go to church through the muddy streets. It will be foggy too, I daresay. And they will come back, and dine on roast turkey and plum pudding—a *bourgeois* dish, but not unpleasing. They will sleep in the afternoon. They will go to bed early, and yawn, and shake their wise old heads and think Christmas a bore. And the children will say, 'Well, *shan't* we have a good time to-morrow, anyway.' . . . Heigho! I wonder what Christmas in Bombay is like?"

ABDUL—"I go to get the bath ready, sir."

AUTHOR.—“Not this morning. I shall visit the swimming bath at Back Bay.”

The salt water in the swimming bath was cool and invigorating. Splashing about in a careless way, I collided somewhat violently with a swimmer coming in the opposite direction. We both retired temporarily under the water. When we emerged again I perceived that J—— (the poet of the *Marperbia*) was wiping the water from his eyes.

“Hello!” I said, as soon as breath came. “It’s you, is it?”

“Me,” he replied ungrammatically; “and none the better for that nasty smack you gave me.”

“I’m sorry, old man; I didn’t see you.”

“Of course not; but I saw you. I was about to wish you a Merry Xmas when you peremptorily closed my mouth. I do so now.”

“The same to you, O Maker of Rhymes.”

We clambered out of the water and proceeded to towel. J—— wished to hear of my adventures since our last meeting, and I related them briefly.

“And you?” I asked; “where have you been?”

“Wandering. I’ve been to the South, where

Caste is king. I've seen a low-caste man crouch to the ground while a Brahmin, devilishly proud, swept along the path. I've driven off a cow that was making a hearty meal from a poor woman's grain-bag. She wouldn't, of course, interfere with the sacred animal herself, but she was jolly glad when I thwacked it away. I've visited a temple of Khandoba, where girls——"

"Hush—sh. You needn't particularise."

"Oh, I was going to put it quite poetically. And I've been to villages where the worship of sex obtains to such an extent that——"

"I think I have heard of those villages."

"No doubt. These are some of the things I have seen. I tell you India is the most astonishing country in the world." J—— combed his hair thoughtfully. "People rave about the sights. But *these* are the sights of India."

Our toilet finished, we strolled out city-wards.

"Mind," continued J——, taking up the thread of conversation again, "it would be foolish to criticise the habits and customs of these Indian people from the John Bullish point of view. I like to think that there is a reasonable basis

for customs the most widely differing from ours, for habits the most repugnant to our feelings."

The sun was shining hotly over the city. From the towers of St Thomas's Cathedral came the sound of Christmas bells.

"Do you realise that this is Christmas morning?" I asked J——.

"I don't," he replied promptly. "You can't transport the Christmas feeling to a tropical country; there is too much make-believe. The proper Dickensian frame of mind won't come under that hot sun. Last week I watched the people doing their Christmas shopping at Whiteaway's. I thought it very perfunctory. Even the children seemed bored." He paused a moment. "By the way," he went on, "this is very fine, of course, but—listen to these bells!—does it not make you sigh a little—just a little—for Tottenham Court Road?"

At this I laughed.

"Or 'the flags of Piccadilly,'" said I,

"which I hated once. I vow
I could wish with all my heart
You were underneath me now!"

But, never mind," I continued, "let's make

believe that it's not Christmas at all, but only an ordinary Sunday."

So we went to church, but there they had Christmas music under the flapping punkahs. Then we came home to tiffin, and found a Christmas *menu* awaiting us, beginning with *Oëufs Noel* and ending with mince pies. At dinner it was even more aggressively Christmas—*dindonneaux truffé à la Perigord* and plum pudding—while the electric fans tried in vain to keep the temperature below 80 degrees. Night coming, we again wandered forth. We walked on the Apollo Bunder, companioned by flitting ghostly forms in white; through the deserted streets of the European quarter, where often came sounds of music to our ears—now the strains of a vocal quartette, now the pure notes of a violin—and so to the borders of the ocean that stretched away into the blackness. At last we forgot that it was what Abdul called "the good day" of Christmas, and only remembered that it was a calm and beautiful night, bright with stars, and silent with a great peace.

CHAPTER XIV

GREY DUST COUNTRY

GUZERAT is the country of grey dust, and Ahmedabad, its capital, is a grey and dusty city. There may be other colours, both in country and city, but in my memory grey predominates.

Grey Dust Country. The roads are a foot thick in dust. The landscape is a great stretch of dust, dotted here and there with brilliant patches of green, where the wells are. Yet this, reader, was once the Garden of India. Once upon a time grass and flowers grew thickly here; streams meandered through meadows where lazy cattle munched contentedly; birds sang gaily in the sunshine. A pleasant, pleasant land, where it was always afternoon. Perhaps the lotus flourished here. I cannot vouch for details, but I am assured that no part of India surpassed Guzerat in sylvan charm. Now it is only Grey Dust Country. What caused the change?

“The British Government,” says my friend

Roy, B.A., whom I have no reason to suppose to be a humorist.

"But how?" I ask. "By what vile alchemy has such a change been wrought?"

Roy shrugs his shoulders.

"*Post hoc, propter hoc,*" says he cynically. "It didn't used to be so in pre-British days; it is so now. The burden of proof is on you, a Briton, to show that it was not the doing of the British Government."

"Want of rain," I reply with conviction; "climate has changed."

"Let 'em build reservoirs then," laughs Roy, who would like to have it both ways. "Why don't they?"

Perhaps Roy did not really give utterance to this astonishing opinion: but I heard so many things in India attributed to the wickedness of the Government, that it is not surprising if occasionally I get a little confused. Certainly famines are the work of the Government. I do not quite know how, but the native agitator has a convincing way of explaining it. Nor do I complain of this. The British Government in India is an alien

government. Let an alien government have all the virtues possible to mortal men, it is still, you see, alien, and therefore accursed. Human nature being what it is, one would be foolish to complain. As an Irishman—when I am not a Cockney—I am perfectly certain that if through some climatic change Killarney became a wilderness, or the fertile grazing land of Meath were turned to desolation, I should put it down to the brutal and incompetent Saxon. Guzerat, I say, was once a garden, and is now a dust-heap. All the king's horses and all the king's men — all governments, authorities, principalities, powers — will not turn it into a garden again, until —

Ah, until the rain comes¹: not in brief showers—not even for one whole season—but steadily year by year: so that the grass may grow, and the grain, and the trees and flowers. Perhaps we shall live to see it—to see Guzerat a garden once again. “What a score for the British Government that would be!” says some simple critic. My dear critic friend,

¹ Since this was written the rain has come with a vengeance: 27 inches in 36 hours. I hope the wilderness is now blossoming as the rose.

you have forgotten my little homily about the Alien. The return of the Garden Era would not be credited to the Government. Innumerable priests at innumerable Hindu shrines would give much more plausible explanations, provocative of goodly stores of treasure for the temples. My friend Roy, B.A., would write in his sarcastic way that "fortunately the stupidity and incompetence of our governing class, though great, is not so great as the benevolence and fecundity of Mother Nature—*Tamen usque recurrit*, as a Latin writer has said. Forgetful of this maxim, our worthy Government has constructed enormous irrigation works; veritable works of Super-irrigation (do you see most amusing pun?) which poor India will have to pay for. Alas, my country, etc." Roy, you villain, as an Irishman (when not a Cockney) I know and applaud the trick. After all, the British have chosen the rôle of the Alien in many parts of the world. If it is not a very comfortable rôle, it is their own fault. The funniest part of it is, Roy, that oddly enough the British themselves don't like aliens one little bit. A few score dumped down in the great city of London—moneyless,

powerless, pitiful—send John Bull into a panic; and John Bull in a panic, Roy, is an amusing creature. You should see him writing letters to the *Times*—making incoherent speeches in the House of Commons—holding meetings of indignation in the “affected districts.” I sometimes think the biggest joke of all would be to see John *governed* by aliens—say, by Yellow Men—just for a month or two. Would he be wildly loyal to his Yellow masters? Would he shed maudlin tears of thankfulness over their virtues and their administrative capacity, as he sometimes expects you to do in India? Would “treason” be such a terrible offence under those circumstances? I wonder, Roy, I wonder!

My mind was running on such a commentary as this one evening as I sat on the verandah of Dr Taylor’s hospitable bungalow outside the city of Ahmedabad. I had walked out from the town across the long bridge that spans the river Sabburmattee. For the most part, the bridge just then spanned a vast stretch of sand and gravel, the river having shrunk to a streamlet in the drought. Crowds of gaily-clad folk were down at the water’s edge

washing clothes : for here was the resort of the *dhobis*. No-caste wanderers — gipsy-like people of the East — had pitched their tents on the waste of sand, and were lounging about their tent doors in the sunshine. But as I walked towards the bungalow, filmy grey clouds came up the sky and obscured the sun. I wondered would it rain. Bullock-carts, laden with bales of cotton, dragged heavily along the road, axle-deep in dust. The drivers, perched on the shafts between the straining bullocks, cracked their long whips, or shouted to the animals with strange guttural cries. The wind blew with a chill in it. Here was a group of natives, footing it silently through the dust, with their blankets wrapped round their shoulders. (That was a spot of rain, surely !) The *bandar-log* — the monkey - people — grey like the country, scampered among the trees, leaping prodigiously from branch to branch ; or sat by the wayside, horribly human, gazing imperturbably at the passers-by. The day darkened. From the verandah I watched the coming of the storm. The sky reached down and touched the tops of the trees. A still-

ness fell on the land. So the grey dust country, after months of drought, awaited, as it were, in a great silence for the rain.

"Water! for anguish of the Solstice. Nay, but turn——"

Yes, Roy; looking across there at the great teeming city of Ahmedabad, with its myriad mosques and temples, its populous streets, its thronging merchants (does not its prosperity "hang by three threads," cotton, silk, and gold?); thinking of its long and panoplied history, of its fierce Rajput kings, its fanatical Moslem rulers, its fiery Mahrattas; remembering the great succession of soldiers, statesmen, men of affairs—ay, artists, too—men who "shaped beauty as they saw it"—shaped it in enduring stone and marble, so that we may see the same beauty, and know and thrill to the same thoughts that burned in their hearts so many centuries ago; remembering all this, Roy, I do not wonder that at times you grow impatient with the Alien, and hint that, after all, he is not absolutely——

At last!

The big drops came pattering down on the roof of the verandah, on the leaves of the trees, on the dusty road. Not thickly as yet: just a drop here and a drop there . . .

READER (*sarcastically*). — “Quite so. We have all seen rain occasionally.”

AUTHOR (*with meekness*). — “Agreed. But why should not I grow sentimental over a shower of rain in India? Didn’t Hamlet sentimentalise over a skull? And Sterne over a donkey? And Ruskin over a fishing-boat? Remember that I had seen no rain since I left Paris two months before: nothing but cloudless blue skies, and a hot sun monotonously climbing cloudless blue skies day after day—a difficult sentence that, you notice.”

READER (*slightly mollified*). — “Well, well. But enough about yourself. Did the country get a good sousing?”

AUTHOR (*confusedly*). — “Um—no. The fact is that this particular shower of rain only lasted about thirty seconds: just long enough to allow me to linger over it sentimentally for a few moments, like—er—Shakespeare and Ruskin, and the other fellows. Oh no! The filmy clouds cleared away in a surprisingly

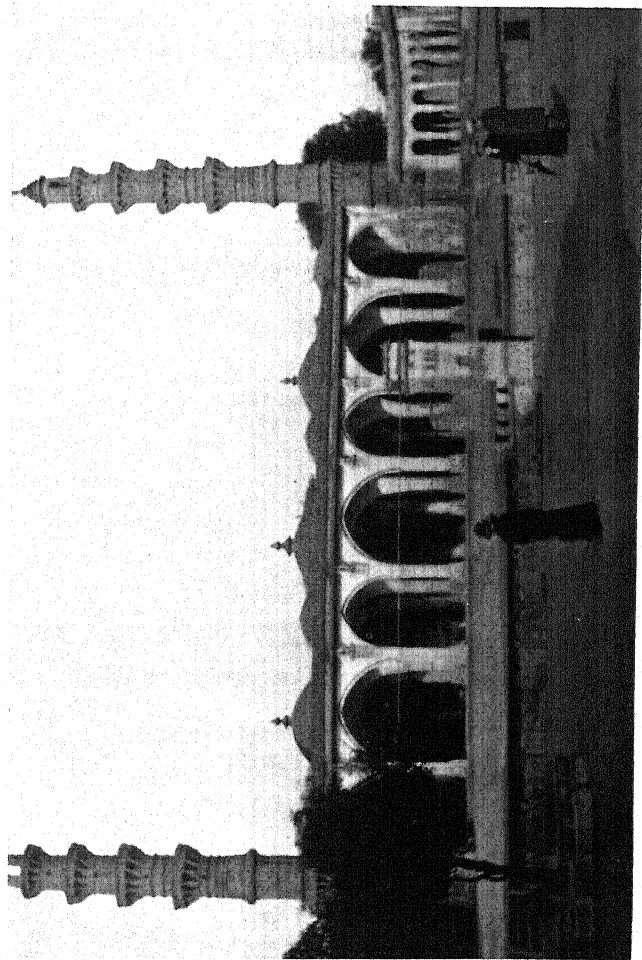
short time, and the sun came out, and I saw no more rain in Ahmedabad or in India. I'm sorry for your sake, but——"

READER (*in disgust*).—"Oh, never mind me! Please get on to the next point."

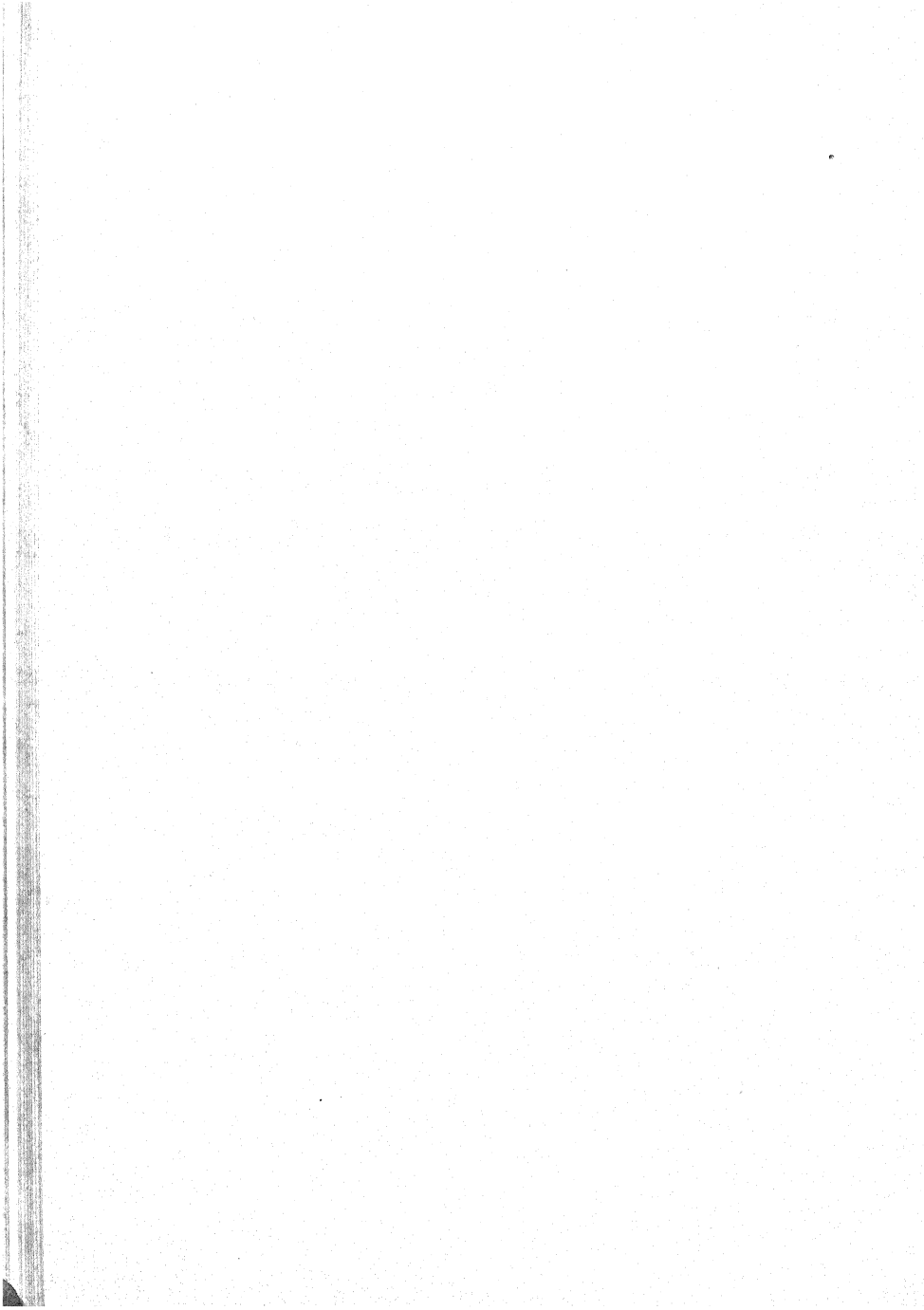
If Ahmedabad were anywhere within easy distance of London, or Paris, or New York, it would be esteemed one of the great show places of the world. Tourists would flock to it innumerable. Railways would give "facilities" for reaching it. Monstrous hotels would be built under the shadow of its walls, or side by side with the perfection of its hidden mosques. No doubt the same thing would apply to many other cities in India. Delhi or Agra or Benares would, were distance naught, compete successfully with the famous cities of the West. But even in India itself one hears little of Ahmedabad. There is so much to see in the country, so many places more striking, more obvious, that comparatively few think it worth while to turn aside and visit the city of Ahmed Shah. Yet in this city are some of the most perfect specimens of Mohammedan architecture in the world.

When I think of certain mosques and tombs, further West—in Egypt, for example—over which guide-books and their too confiding readers are accustomed to expend so much rhetoric, and when I compare these mosques and tombs with the mosques and tombs of Ahmedabad, I know that I am comparing the sham with the real, the inferior with the superior, art in its decadence with art in all its sincerity and strength. Be pleased not to mistake me. I have no desire to see Ahmedabad, or any other city of India, overrun with idle and ignorant tourists. I do not even wish to see it the resort of highly-intellectual persons, cultured to the finger-tips, and cherishing a great contempt for all those lowly-intellectual persons who do not know precisely what the “note” of Jain architecture is. But for those quiet and humble souls who can enjoy beautiful things in stone and marble without talking too much about it, there is much of interest in Ahmedabad.

But strong and sincere art only flourishes—despite various writers—in the midst of strong and sincere life. As a matter of history, Ahmedabad was a great centre of commerce



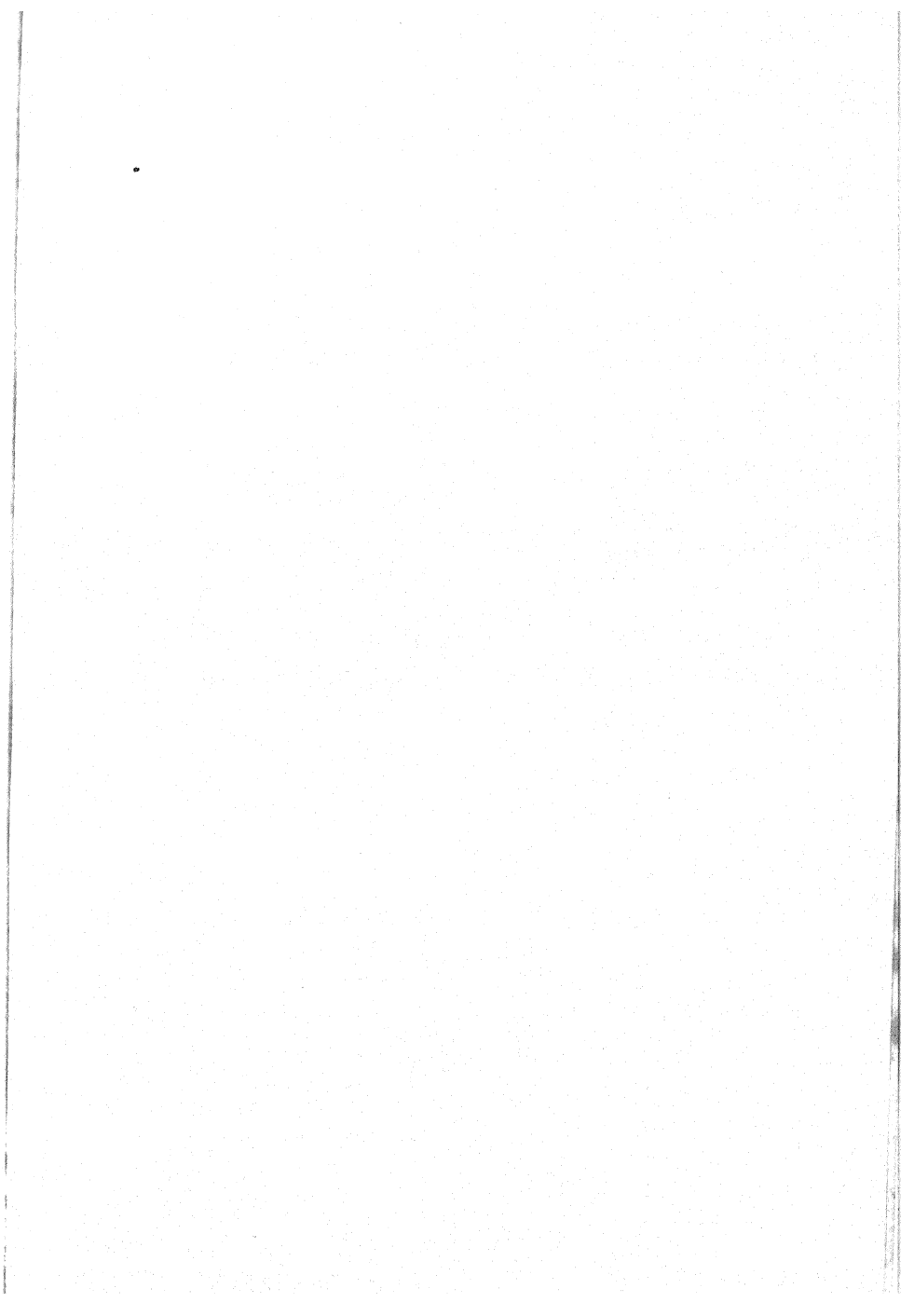
THE MOSQUE OF SHAH ALUM, AHMEDABAD.

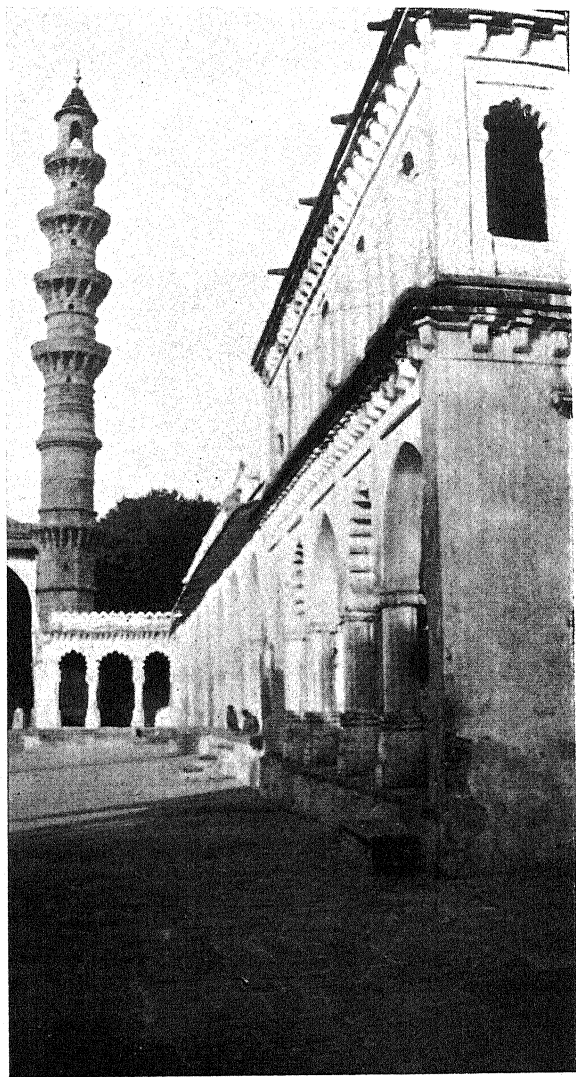


long before the mosque builders came, and under their régime. So the books say. *A priori*, you can quite imagine why it should be so. Take the map of India, and find thereon the city of Ahmedabad. Look at its position: how it dominates the great west coast road which runs from Bombay, through the ancient port settlements of Surat, and Broach, and Cambay, northwards; observe how it knots up in itself, like a ganglion, the road-fibres that stretch out, fan-shape, north through the immensity of Rajputana, still north through the Punjaub, and so to far Cashmir: north, too, by Sinde, where mighty Indus pours its waters; and westerly to Beluchistan, which is the route to Persia. Cannot you easily imagine how Ahmedabad came to be the great mart for the north-west of India? Some one has called it—or rather, Unhilwara, which was the name of the capital before the time of Ahmed—"The Venice of India." Truly enough, Unhilwara held the gorgeous East in fee for India, as Venice did for Europe. In its great Rajput days merchants from many countries mingled in its thronged markets: Arabs from the

gulf, Persians, Beluchis, Punjaubis, Afghans, Rajputs, Bengalis, bannias from Bombay. A famous capital was Unhilwara then, when a Rajput king sat on the throne of Guzerat, ministered unto by "white-robed priests of the Jain religion, or by the Brahminical wearers of the badge of regeneration": a Hindu monarch reigning over a Hindu people, skilled in arts of war and of peace.

Here, then, was a vigorous common life, fit foundation for great architecture or great art of any kind. But the architecture of Ahmedabad is essentially Mohammedan, not Hindu. Mosques, not temples, are its chief glories. And indeed the Moslem from the North drove out the Rajput—fire and sword swept through this ordered industrial civilisation—before the builders came who left their stamp on the city. Yet Hindu art did not die: for the character of the architecture of Ahmedabad is that it is not purely Mohammedan, but Mohammedan veneered, so to say, by Hindu. The Mohammedan gave the word; sketched the plans of his mosque and tombs; but the Hindu carried out the work. Not only that, but the Mohammedan





MOHAMMEDAN-HINDU ARCHITECTURE, AHMEDABAD.

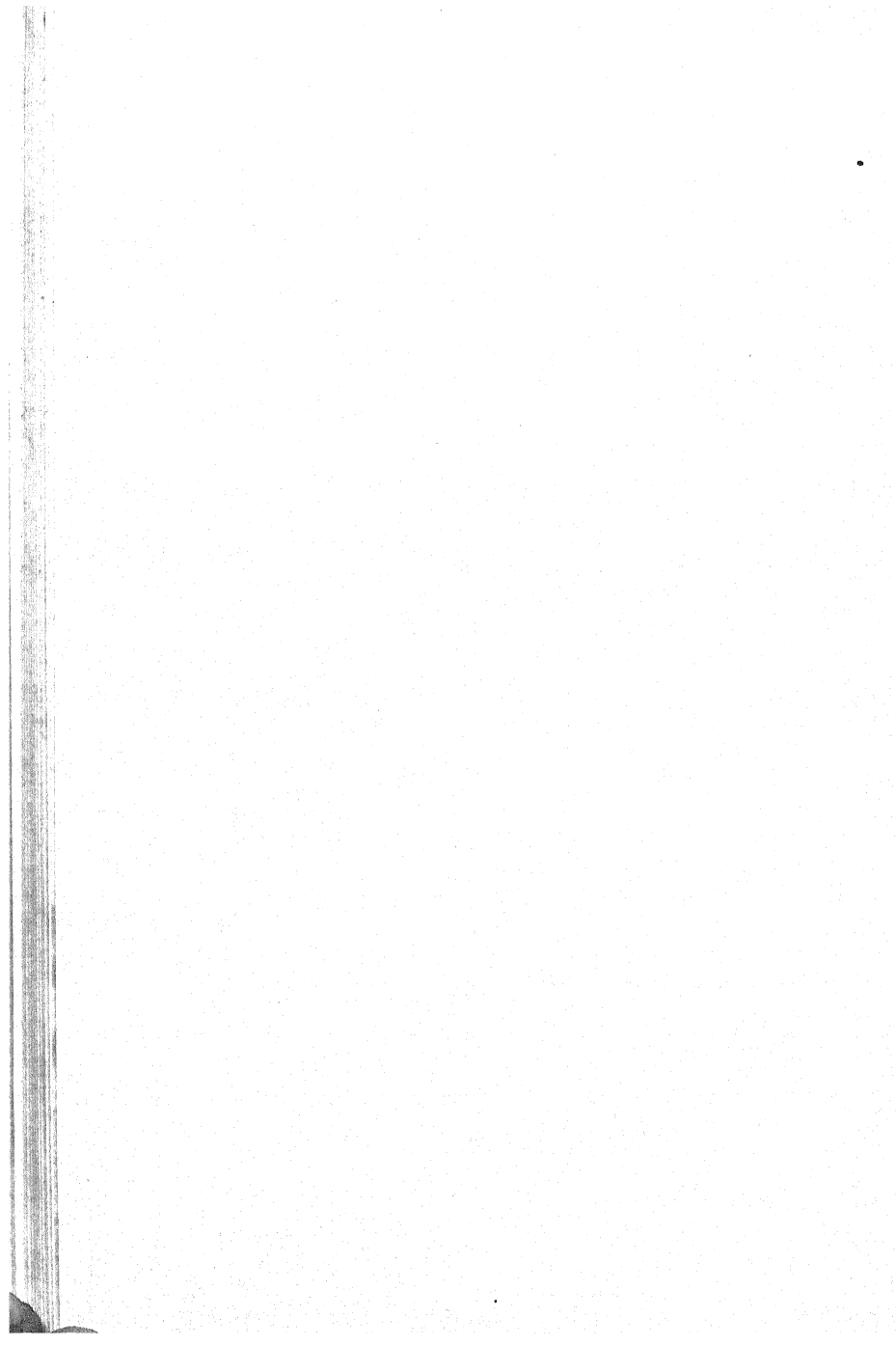
deigned to borrow ideas from the Hindu, constructive ideas and decorative ideas. And nowhere else in India is this mingling of styles seen to such advantage. There is no clashing, no incongruity; the combination has a perfect beauty of its own. Yet much of the work was, Mr Ruskin would have been sorry to hear, the work of slaves: of proud men beaten to their knees by an alien race. "Whoever visits Ahmedabad," says one writer, "may behold the subterranean temple of the persecuted Hindu and the tall minaret of the Moslem in his day of power and intolerance." True: yet the persecuted Hindu, when set upon the hated labour of carving these tall minarets, could not quite forget the beauty that his fathers had taught him. In many a flowing line he carved it, losing, perhaps, in love of his work hatred of the oppressor. Slave-work is good sometimes — when the slave happens to be an artist, and the work his art.

Is it worth while recounting, ever so briefly, the history of Ahmedabad, from the time when Bheem Dev the Rajput sat on the throne until the inevitable British red-coat

appeared on the banks of the Sabburmattee, when George III. was king? I do not think so. Sir William Hunter tells the tale picturesquely and well. Suffice it to say that the mosque - building period covered about three centuries, say from 1400 to 1700, and that Akbar the Mogul reigned at Ahmedabad what time our Queen Elizabeth sat on the throne of England. Nor shall I catalogue painfully the lovely mosques of the city. As I write, a guide - book lies open beside me: not a very exhaustive guide-book, to be sure, but the names of all the famous mosques are there, and I could copy down a long and tedious list which would have a look of learning and research, and would fill this page with little trouble to myself; but no one would be particularly edified. Let me say this, however. If I were asked what was the dominant characteristic of an Ahmedabad mosque, I think I should reply "*perfect balance.*" Every distance is accurately judged; every detail is just where it should be, and is absolutely right in the amount of attention it attracts. So the eye is never strained, never bewildered, but, resting on quietness and harmony, takes



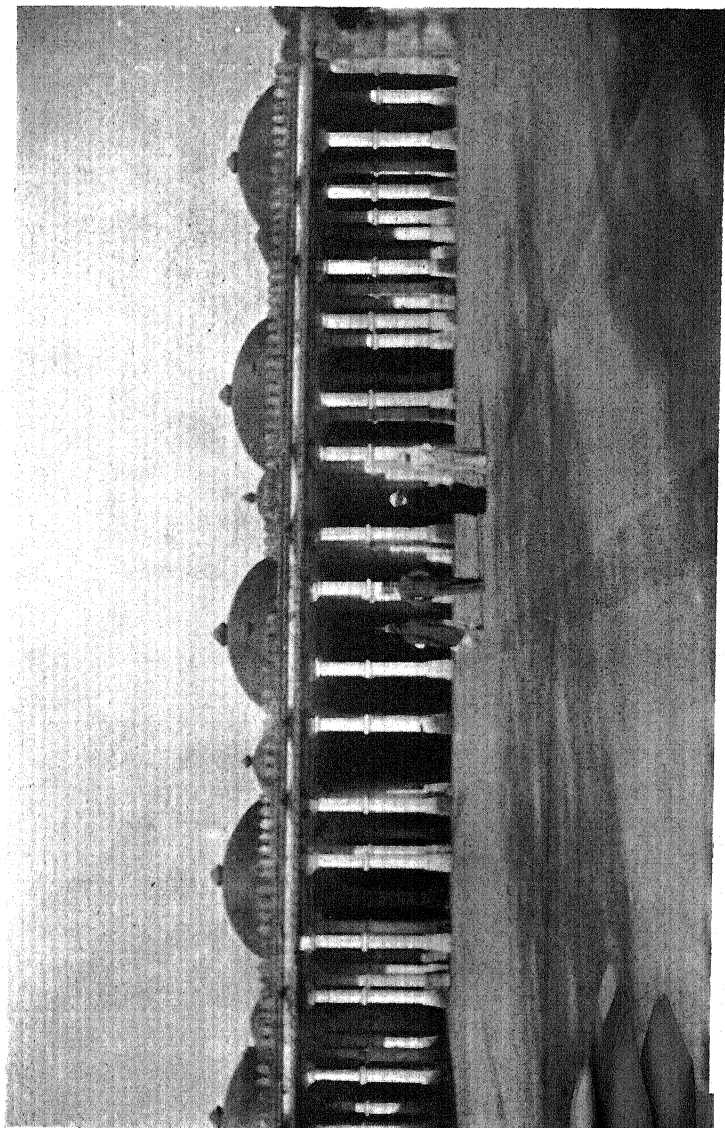
TOMB OF RANEE SUPREE, AHMEDABAD.



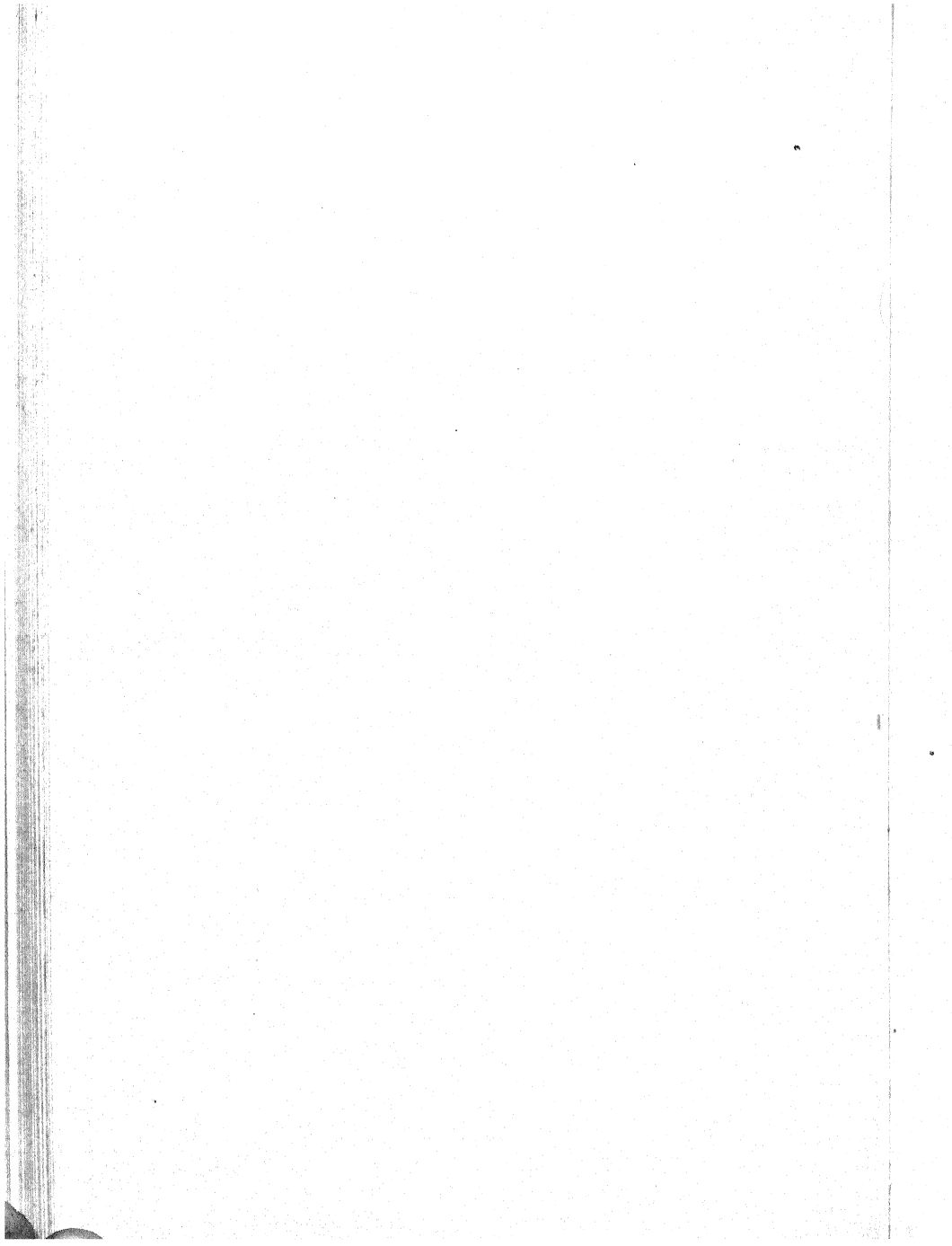
the picture without effort. I marvel at these men of the past—these fighting and building Pathans and Moguls: I marvel at their unerring sense of proportion. They had a real instinct for “values.” We moderns have lost the secret. Forgetful of the tomb, we build ourselves houses of sorts, churches of sorts, municipal offices of sorts. But it is all vanity. However noble and elegant these buildings may be, they lack the gracious somewhat that gives wholeness, completeness, life. Yes; your palaces and theatres of the West are dead: these mosques and tombs of the East are alive. Wise men may try to analyse that gracious somewhat. Subjectively—ah there, my friend, you stumble on the mystery. Objectively, I am sure that this faultless appreciation of the relation of parts to the whole touches the matter with a needle. . . . Well, without cataloging, I remember the tomb of Ranees Supree; the wonderful carved windows in the mosque of Seede Syed, in which the tracery in solid stone is as dainty and as delicate as ever Western men have done in iron; and some miles outside the city, the stupendous ruins

of Sirkej, where, remote from the hum of tourist traffic, remote from the great world, you will find some of the most beautiful buildings of all time. Rhapsody? Well, just you go to Sirkej and see for yourself.

There is a large Jain temple in Ahmedabad which is supposed to be very fine. I went to look at it; and it is certainly very rococo and striking. But here again the trivial claimed my attention. As I stood by the gate of the temple, two girls, dressed in pure white, crossed the courtyard. The lower part of their faces was covered with a white cloth, so that little but the eyes was visible. Their skirts were about ankle-height, but stood out from the limbs in crinoline fashion. As the girls walked they gently brushed the ground before them with feather brooms. I found these girls more interesting than Jain architecture. They were, I was informed, Jain nuns. The covering for the nose and mouth, the crinoline arrangement, and the feather brooms, were designed to prevent the unwitting destruction of life—yea, even of the lowliest life. I had often heard of the Jain objection to taking life of any sort, but



MOSQUE AT SIRKEJ,



this concrete instance brought home to me the grandeur of an idea which has never been reached by men in the West: *the essential sacredness of the life-principle*. Oh! Do not trouble to advance the red in "tooth and claw" argument: spare me quotations from the poets; don't point to obvious absurdities in practice of such a creed. I say that the Jain who refuses to deprive even a flea of life is doing homage to the greatest mystery the world knows, or is ever likely to know. "Fiddlesticks!" says the acute reader; "he spares the flea because he imagines that he may possibly be sparing an incarnation of his deceased grandmother." My friend, I am aware of that, too. But if that be only another way of stating the problem?

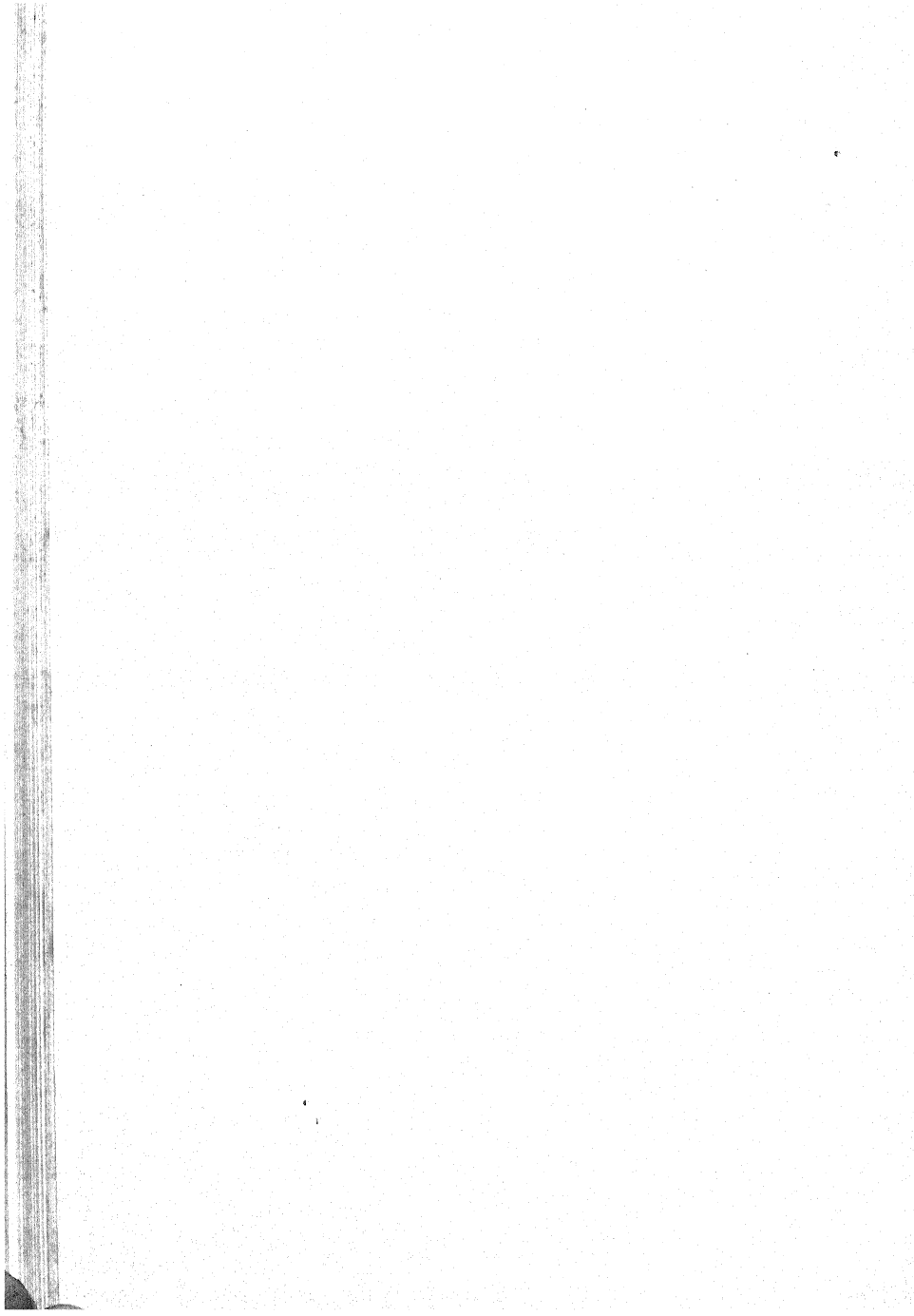
APPENDIX VII

AHMEDABAD

IN the brave days of the early seventeenth century Ahmedabad was well known to English traders. The agents of the East India Company made it one of their chief stopping places, and in the letters which they sent home to the Company at regular intervals, we have many a glimpse of the chief city of Guzerat. On one date in December 1614 there were nearly twenty of these hardy merchants gathered at "Amadavas" (by the way, they spelled the word, "Amadavas," "Amadaver," "Amadever," and "Amadavares," quite indifferently). Some were bound for Agra; some for Ajmere; some for Cambay: all had come from Surat. To say the truth, the letters do not give us any description at all of the place, of its architecture, or of the ways and customs of the people; they are typical business letters. Thomas Aldworth announces that "here we find indigo, white powder sugars, and divers other stuffs fit for your country." William Edwards finds "indigo at reasonable rates." He also tells the Directors that a merchant is despised by the Court of Agra, wherefore he proposes to



COTTON-FIELD, AHMEDABAD,



proceed to that city, "under the title of King's Messenger and servant." What trade is doing in the country; what are the prospects in "Peartia" or the Punjaub; the success So-and-so has had in the elephants' teeth line: these are the topics of the honest merchants. You feel that "Amadavas" is a busy city, but you don't see the mosques. Sometimes there is news of illness or death. "In my last writing to you I was very sick of the ague, but since, I thank God, very well." "*Laus Deo*," begin the letters as a rule, and they end, "I commit you to God's merciful protection, and rest ever at Your Worships' service." They were pious folk, these wandering agents of the E.I.C.

The amusing Tavernier visited the city ten or twelve times. He noted that it was "one of the greatest cities in India, and might trade for silk-stuffs, hangings of Gold and silver, and others mixed with silk." Also sugar, spices, fruits, and other "raw material." He observed the eccentricities of the Sabburmattee. There was no bridge in those days, and the current was too swift for boats when the river was in flood. "You must wait till the waters are fall'n" if you want to cross. But "the Country people" do not wait. They swim across on goat-skins filled with air; "and when they would carry their children along with them, they put them in certain round pots of earth the mouth whereof is four fingers wide, and drive the pots before

them." And then Tavernier, as is his wont, relates a curious anecdote about a Child, a Pot, and a Snake; also another about a man (an Indian George Washington) who could not tell a Lye; and so on. Tavernier does not tell us much about the city; but he visited Sirkej, and was mightily impressed with it. And he did not fail to notice the monkeys: in fact, he devotes quite a large amount of space to them. "The Banians have a great veneration for Apes," says he; "and there are some which they breed up in their Pagods to worship. There are 3 or 4 Houses in Ahmedabat which they make use of for Hospitals for Cows, Oxen, Apes, and other sick or maimed Beasts; and they carry all they can find thither to preserve them. This is also very remarkable that every Tuesday and Friday all the Apes in the places adjoining to Ahmedabat of their own accord come to the City, and get upon the tops of their Houses, where they lye during the excessive heats, and therefore upon those days the People never fail to set ready in their Terraces Rice, Millet, Sugar Canes in their seasons, and other such-like things. For if the Apes did not find their provision when they came, they would break the tiles wherewith the rest of the House is cover'd, and do a great deal of mischief. And you must here take notice also that the Ape never eats anything which he does not very well like the scent of beforehand; and

before he swallows anything, he lays up his Magazin against future hunger; filling his bags with provision, which he keeps till next day.

“I have said that the Banians have a particular veneration for the Ape, of which I give you one example among many that I could bring. Being one day at Ahmedabat at the House belonging to the Hollanders, a young man of that Nation newly arrived to serve at the factory, not knowing the Custom of the Country, and seeing a great ape upon a tree in the Court, would needs shew a piece of activity, or rather a trick of youth, to kill the Ape with a small gun. I was at the table then with the Dutch Commander; and we no sooner heard the blow, but we heard as soon the loud noise of Banians that wait upon the Holland Company, who came to complain bitterly of him that had kill'd the Ape. They would all have been gone; so that the Commander had much ado, and made many excuses before he could appease them, and oblige them to stay.

“In the Neighbourhood about Ahmedabat there are a great number of Apes. And this is observable, that where there are a great number of these animals there are very few Crows. For as soon as they have built their Nests and laid their Eggs, the Apes get upon the Trees and throw their Eggs to the ground. One day returning from Agra, and departing out of Ahmedabat with the English President, who

came hither about some business and was returning to Surat, we pass'd through a little forrest of Trees, called Mangoes, some four or five leagues from Ahmedabat; where we saw a vast number of great monkeys male and female, and many of the Females holding their young ones in their arms. We had each of us our Coach, and the English President causing his to stop, told me he had an excellent and very neat Harquebuss, that was presented him by the Governor of Daman, and knowing I could aim well, he desir'd me to try it at one of those Apes. One of my servants, who was born in the Country, making me a sign not to venture, I endeavoured to dissuade the President from his design; but it was impossible; so I took the Harquebuss, and kill'd a female Monkey, who lay stretched out upon the Boughs, letting her little ones fall to the ground. But it fell out as my servant had forewarn'd me; for immediately all the Monkeys that were upon the Trees, to the number of sixty, came down in a great fury, to have leap'd into the President's Coach, where they would soon have strangled him, had we not prevented them by closing the shutters, and had we not had a great number of Servants, that with much ado kept them off. And though they came not to my coach, yet I was very much afraid of myself; for they pursued the President's Coach above a League, and they were stout lusty Monkeys."

CHAPTER XV

DIVERSIONS OF A RAILWAY JOURNEY

It was not by accident that I met my friend J—— in the train at Ahmedabad one January morning. We had long since vowed to “see the Taj,” or perish in the attempt. “Why not see it together?” asked J—— casually. “Why not?” I echoed. So the matter was arranged. Sir F—— was due to visit Baroda, and I found myself able to spend a week in the north. On that cold January morning I woke early; had chota hazri while it was yet dark; and, bidding good-bye to the kind friends at the Irish Mission Bungalow, set out for the station ere the sun had risen. Ahmedabad was wakening itself slowly as I drove through the streets. Rows and rows of the inhabitants squatted on the side-path, industriously cleaning their teeth. Grey monkeys swung on the lamp-posts, or performed acrobatic feats around the chimney-pots. It is wonderful how soon one becomes accustomed in the East to un-Western

things. It seemed quite natural that the *bandar-log* should make a circus of the Ahmedabad High Street. I thought it would add to the gaiety of life if we could have a similar performance in the Strand; or if grey monkeys should sit on the lamp-posts of Whitehall and gently pull the hair of Cabinet Ministers as they walked down to the House of Commons.

At the station, as I say, I met J——, who, now that he has remained anonymous so long, may as well be an initial to the end of the chapter. As we breakfasted together on board the train—and you get as good a breakfast on an Indian train as on any train in the world—we, as usual, exchanged experiences. J—— had been interviewing collectors and judges, and was full of enthusiasm for the work of Indian administrators.

“Mind,” he said, as he poured out a second cup of tea, “mind, I can’t forget your point about the Alien. We have no business in India unless we can carry on the government, not only as well as the native, but better—much better. Even then I am doubtful about the morals of the thing. After all, as has been pointed out by numerous Western

sociologists, a good government is only a government which the majority of the governed think good: of the *governed*, mark you: not of people six thousand miles away. If we have failed to bring about this result in India we have failed to justify our existence as a government. I think, on the whole, we have not failed. I think that, on the whole, the Indian people know and feel that with all its defects the British Government is a good government: good in intention, at least, often good in execution."

AUTHOR.—"Probably the best government India has ever had. There never was a golden age in India—not since Vedic times, anyway. Wave after wave of invasion; dynasty sweeping away dynasty; plunder and rapine and sword——"

J.—"Agreed. But people have short memories. 'Why didn't you leave us in Egypt?' is an old cry. I say we must justify our existence now: day by day, year by year, generation by generation."

AUTHOR.—"You think we do so?"

J.—"On the whole, yes. In intention, the British Government in India is as nearly absolutely just as anything we are likely to

get in this world; in execution, we often fail because we have the defects of our qualities. We are strong, and so we are proud. We will not take advice from those who often know best—I mean, from educated natives; so we come at times to a heavy fall.

“Yes, I admire the work of these Indian administrators. The other day I was staying with one who had a huge district under him: perhaps 100,000 souls, perhaps more. To these poor people my friend stands very much in the place of a parent. ‘My position,’ says he, ‘is not so much to administer the law, as to stand between the law and the people: to soften its rigours, to apply a sort of discretionary or rough-and-ready justice, rather than the justice of the statute-book. So we get along excellently together. I always try to do the right thing, and the people know it, and trust me accordingly.’

“As we talked, we were riding along, my friend and I, on the outskirts of his district. Not far off we could see the mud walls of a native village. Suddenly my friend—whom I shall call F—— pulled his horse up.

“‘What the devil’s this?’ he cried, looking down over his horse’s neck.

“‘Sahib,’ said a voice, apparently proceeding from the dust, ‘Sahib.’

“Then followed a short conversation between F—— and the native, during which F—— pulled out a notebook and made some jottings. In a very few moments the native, after low salaams to both of us, glided softly away, and we resumed our journey.

“‘What was it all about?’ I asked F——, who seemed to take the incident as a matter of course.

“‘Oh,’ said he, ‘these fellows always lay their grievances before me personally when I am making my rounds. They don’t yet trust the native assistants, for which I’m sorry. This man, for example, says that a Sahib who was shooting here last week shot one of his bullocks—I presume by accident—and went off without settling the bill. Complainant puts the bill at so much, and leaves the matter in my hands.’

“‘And you will investigate it?’ I asked.

“‘Of course,’ replied F—— promptly. ‘If I find the facts as stated, I shan’t be long identifying that Sahib, and he must pay compensation; not the value of the bullock according to its owner, but according to me. Now the man whom you have just seen is

as certain that compensation for the bullock will reach his hands as he is that the sun will rise to-morrow. That's the secret of my success with these people."

"'And, extended to the nth. power,' said I, 'it is the secret of the success of the British Government in India.'

"F—— and I," continued J——, "had quite a long chat on this occasion.

"'Of course,' said F——, 'when I speak of administering justice, I speak of a very difficult thing in this country. You may wish to do justice with all your heart, and still be unable to do it. Truth is so difficult to discover. Not only is it at the bottom of a well, but the well is stuffed full of *débris*.'

"'As for instance?' said I.

"'Certainly,' said F——. 'The other day I had a case before me where one Das brought an action for damages against his neighbour Sen. Sen was the owner of a large herd of cattle. Das alleged that Sen kept his fences in such a defective condition that the cattle strayed into his (Das') property, not once but many times, damaging his growing crops. The case seemed clear enough till I heard the defence. The defence was that Das had an ancient grudge against Sen:

that in consequence Das plotted against his neighbour; that in the darkness and silence of the night Das *himself removed* the barriers between Sen's land and his own, thus allowing the cattle to stray among the crops. Sen had a long string of witnesses deposing to these facts; some had actually seen him take down the barriers. You perceive the difficulty in which a judge finds himself.'

" 'And what did you do in this case?' I queried curiously.

" 'Oh, I adjourned the case, and consulted the headman of the village. He was of opinion that the witnesses on both sides were suborned: on the plaintiff's to exaggerate certain damage which had probably been committed; on the defendant's to swear to a removal of barriers which never took place. So I gave the plaintiff small damages, and lectured everybody promiscuously on the enormity of the crime of perjury. I fear nobody was satisfied.'

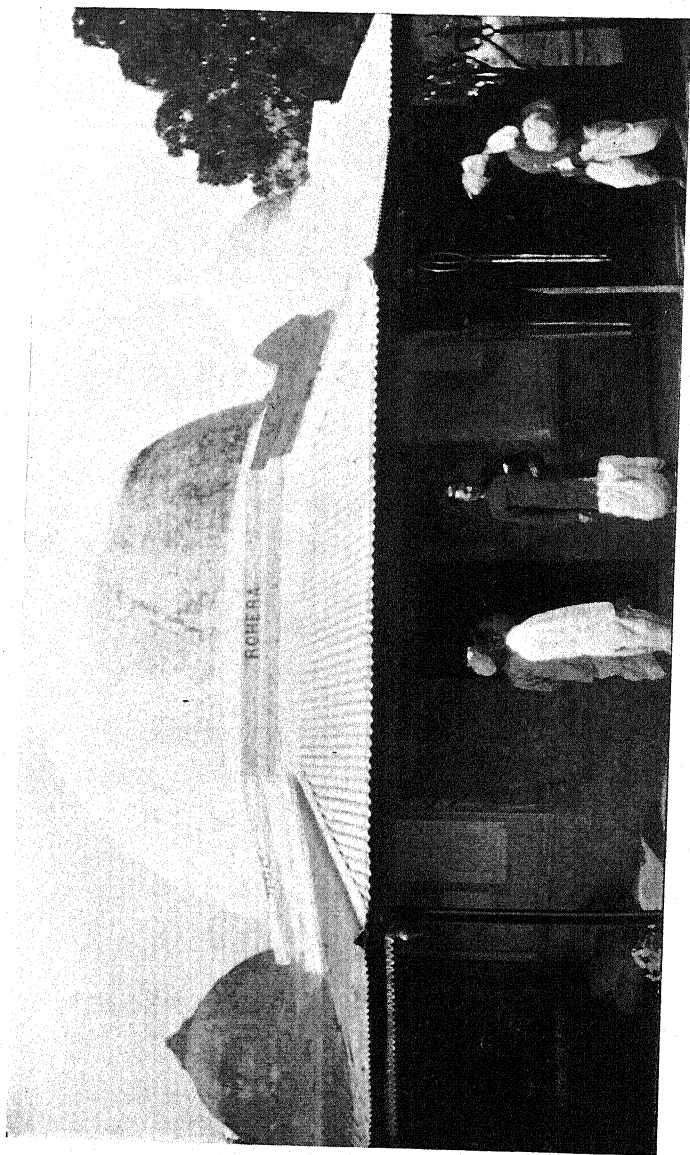
" 'Many curious and interesting things,' concluded J——, "did F—— tell me during this ride: how, for example, he has to cope, at times almost single-handed, with plague, and famine, and cholera—'You have to set your teeth so often in India,' was one of his dicta. Wherefore I admire these Indian civilians,

who work so strenuously and with so little encouragement, while we decadents sit at home, polishing phrases——”

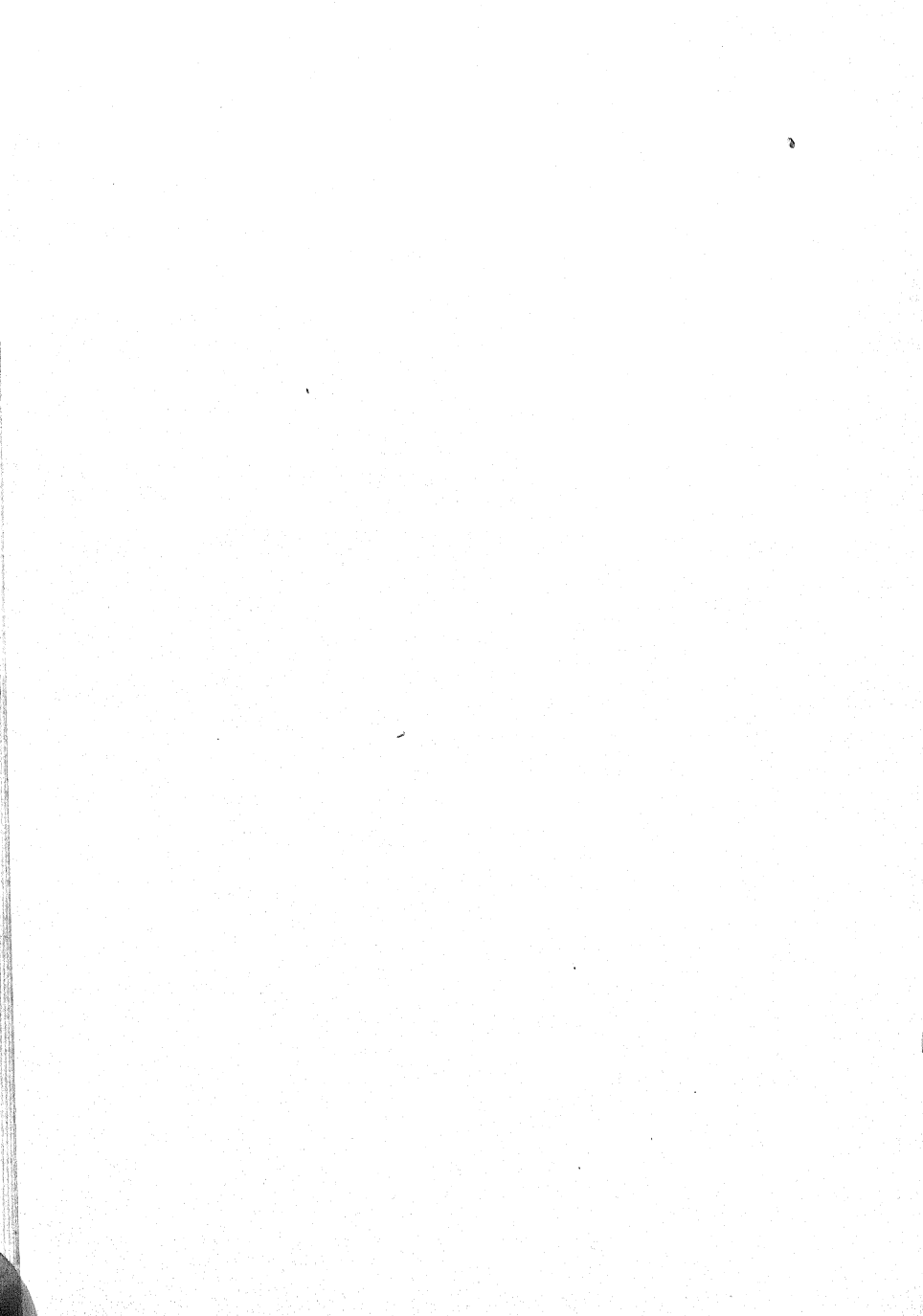
AUTHOR.—“Speak for yourself, J——.”

J.—“—Or drawing silly pleadings.”

By this time we had finished breakfast, and having left the restaurant car, were ensconced in our compartment, gazing out at the scenery. And such scenery: wide brown plains, scrub-covered, sweeping away to the horizon, where they are bounded by a low line of brown hills, also scrub-covered. Later on the scrub disappears; the plains are bare, desolate, barren, without a sign of human life. These are the wastes of Rajputana. Here is a range of bare grey hills not at all unlike the Alps Maritimes. And here is Mount Abu itself, “out of whose fire-fountains at the saintly Vashishta’s prayer arose the great progenitors of the Rajput race.” Yes, we are in the land of the Rajput, a bare and barren land, fit breeding-place for a hardy fighting stock. With Mount Abu we lose the greyness. Now we are in a yellow country. Yellow sand and yellow rock stretch as far as the eye can reach. And still desolation. Few houses in all these wide spaces, no villages; no sign of life but an occasional herd of goats, or



A WAYSIDE STATION.



string of camels. Did somebody say India was over-populated?

So we spent some hours gazing out of the window, fascinated by the wastes of Rajputana.

"I wonder if it inspires you, J——?" I said at length. "To me it is all rather depressing."

"On the contrary," replied J——. "I am in good spirits. Harken :

"Let me sing a song
On the road to Delhi,
For the way is long
Up from Tinnevelley——"

AUTHOR. — "But you haven't come from Tinnevelley !"

J.— "Shut up ! I'm about to explain :

"(This is not my route,
But the rhyme it eases.
Pegasus—the brute !—
Goes just as he pleases.)"

AUTHOR (*sotto voce*). — "Beastly doggerel ! Imitation of Thackeray, too."

J.— "Tho' this train is not
Pegasus exactly,
Still, its steady trot
Makes th' parallel in fact lie."

(AUTHOR.— "Oh ! oh !")

J.— "O'er the spreading wide
Plains of Rajputana
On and on we glide
By Ajmere, Marwar, Nana.

"Here a herd of goats
 Grazing on the mountains.
 (Yonder white cloud floats
 Over Abu's fountains).

"Bullocks, scraggy, thin—
 Slouching camels peering;
 Ne'er a house or inn
 Lonely travellers cheering."

AUTHOR.—"Who ever saw a camel peer?"

J. (*hotly*).—"Who ever saw it do anything
 else?"

"So along we glide
 By the Rajput's fastness.
 Far on every side
 Stretches dismal vastness.
 When the morning breaks,
 Author, I may tell thee,
 Sure as snakes is snakes,
 We shall be in Delhi."

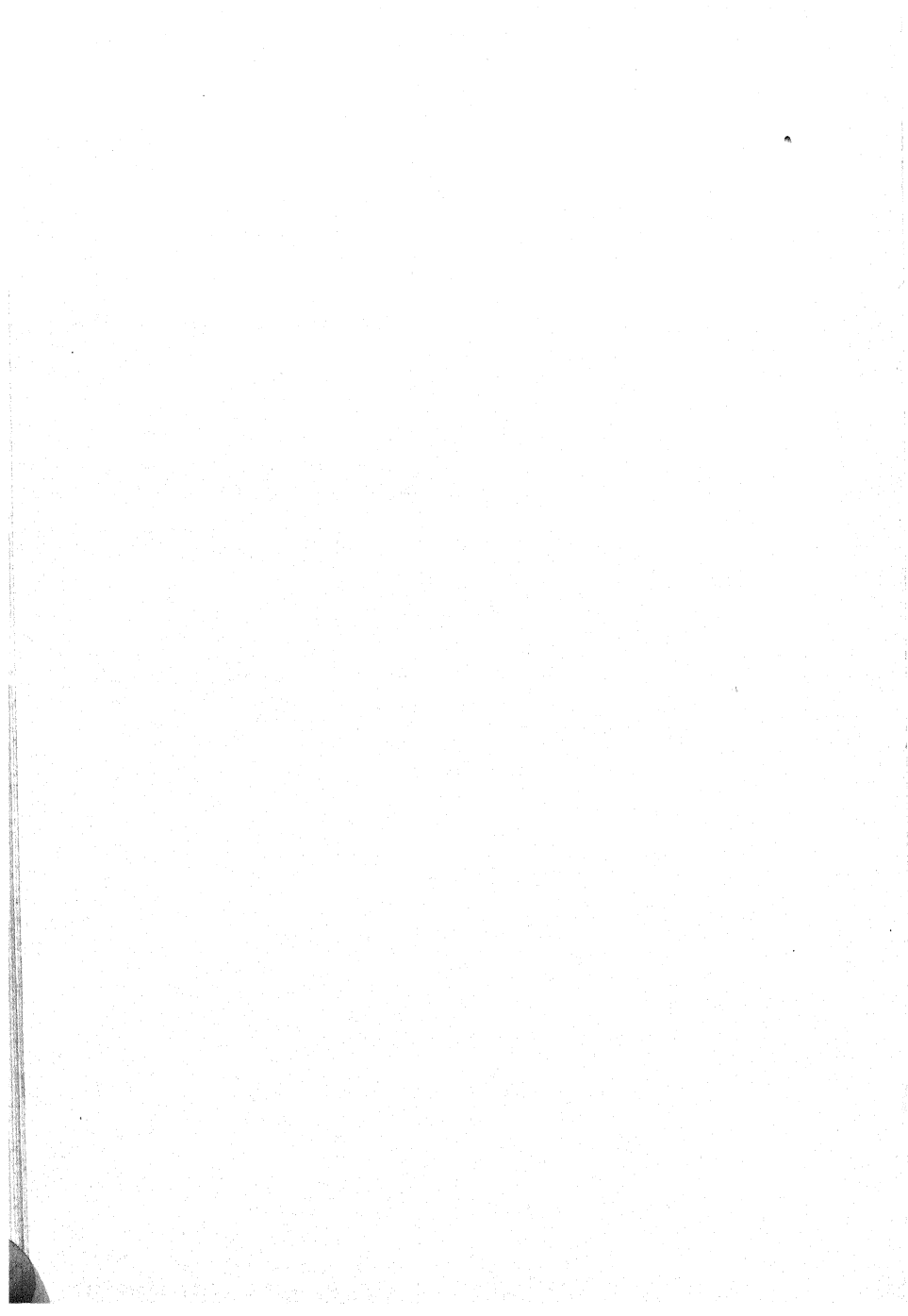
AUTHOR.—"Please, no more."

The long day came to a close at last. Darkness fell on the land after the usual Indian sunset (I make my generalisation rashly, with but small experience)—a sunset beginning in gold and ending in blood. After darkness came dinner; and not so very long after dinner, bed.

J—— and I, having settled quite a large number of Indian problems satisfactorily, turned in. You know what "turning in" means on Indian trains. You make your bed by spreading



A SELLER OF FRUIT AND SWEETMEATS.



*your "rezai" on the long seat; don your night attire; lie down and cover yourself with rugs and blankets, and sleep—if you can. I say "if you can." The train stops at all stations of importance. You might think that a train arriving at a station at, say, 3 A.M. would pick up few passengers. Not so: night and day are apparently alike to the Indian. Consequently trains start and arrive at all hours of the twenty-four with splendid impartiality. I remember leaving Delhi at 4.30 A.M. one freezing winter's morning because it was "the best train" for Agra. To repeat, there are always plenty of passengers. The platforms are crowded with waiting natives: dark, silent figures, huddled together in the gloom. But the train arrives; the gas is turned up; the silent, huddled figures spring into life; Babel begins. Everybody talks to everybody else. The inevitable sweetmeat man cries his wares. (Why, I wonder, are the Indians so fond of sweets?) The bhisti offers a drink freely and without price to all thirsty souls. An "indescribable feud" rages in the place. And sleepless passengers wonder wrathfully why all Indian night trains are not through expresses.

But morning breaks at length. At a little

wayside station comes hot tea: and the discomforts of the night are forgotten.

About 2 A.M. something happens. I am awakened from a light sleep by hearing the door of the carriage thrown violently open. There is a shuffle of feet, and a soft voice cries, "Ek!" in the blackness. I sit up and rub my eyes. Two dark figures are in the act of seizing my luggage, which lies upon the opposite berth. Clearly a case of robbery. I spring up and cry angrily, "Drop it!"

The dark figures dropped it simultaneously.

I pointed sternly towards the door.

"*Jao*," I said, "*chale jao*." This I had learned from the phrase-book. The natives looked irresolute.

"Sahib," said one, salaaming, "if the Sahib would listen——"

"Eh! what's that?"

"My mastare comes in—he wants seat."

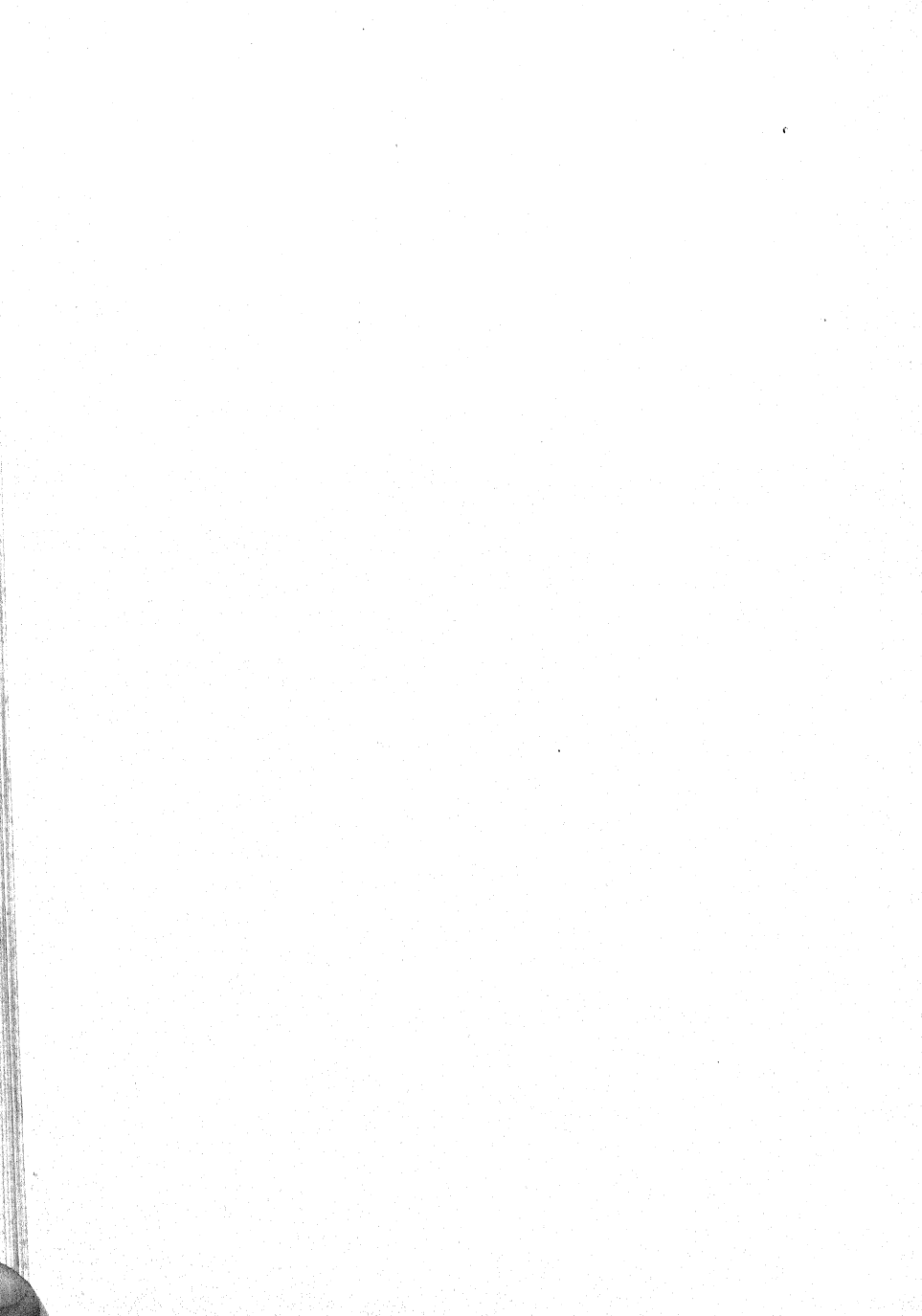
By this time I was thoroughly awake. J—— still snored in the top berth.

"Oh, that's it, is it?" I said, feeling rather foolish. "*Achcha*. But be careful."

Soon the "mastare" comes in: a tall, military man, whom I at once mentally christen "Anglo-India." He finishes a conversation with his friend: "Shootin' good?" "Oh, just middlin';



WATER FOR THE THIRSTY.



some wild-duck." "Ah, well, goo'-bye, o' boy."
 "Goo'-bye, o' man, goo'-bye." The train moves
 off. Anglo-India nods to me, murmurs in
 answer to my question "*Rewari*," and throws
 himself down on his berth. Darkness and
 quiet reign once more, save that J—— still
 snores, and that the train click-clicks through
 the night. Have I been dreaming? Or have
 I been living in an old Indian novel—"Little
 Henry and his Bearer," perhaps? But then,
 Little Henry did not travel in a railway train;
 he used a palan—a palan—something. Bother!
 what did that little villain use? Anyway, this
 was a railway—a rail——

Next morning, just after the sun rose, we
 pulled into Delhi.

CHAPTER XVI

DELHI

THERE was once a low-caste man who lived at Dum Dum; the man was a soldier. On a certain day he had a great thirst upon him, so he asked a fellow-soldier for a drink out of his *lotah*, that is, his brass bowl. "Give *you* a drink?" replied the fellow-soldier loftily; "not if I know it;" for the fellow-soldier was a Brahmin. "Ho! ho!" says Low-Caste, "you're mighty particular." "I am particular," says the Brahmin; "always was." "Not always," says Low-Caste, quick as lightning. The Brahmin looked at him. "What do you mean, you son of a dog?" he queried politely. "Just this," says Low-Caste, getting out of the Brahmin's reach, "*that you bite cartridges every day of your life which have been smeared with cow's fat.*" Soon after this there was a Mutiny.

As J—— and I drove from the station to Laurie's Hotel, my head was full, not of Babar and Akbar and Shah Jehan and Aurungzebe, but of

more modern heroes: men, doubtless, of infinitely smaller calibre, but still, in their way, heroes. I mean, of course, the men of the Mutiny. And, mark you, I say "in their way." I do not at all subscribe to the Heroic theory of history; it is an entirely unfair and misleading theory. It immortalises a few brave men, and consigns numberless equally brave men to oblivion. No doubt Nicholson and Havelock and Outram and the rest did their duty and acted as brave men should act. But so did hundreds of British Tommies who fell fighting, or (a hundred times worse) died of cholera. So did hundreds of unknown and unremembered native soldiers who fought and gave their lives, they hardly knew why, for the Stranger. The forgotten brave appeal far more to me than the remembered. People talk about the Duke of This and Lord That at the battle of Waterloo. Why, Waterloo was the battle of the common soldier. Lord This and Earl T'other were dancing in Brussels while Tommy, the common soldier, was already exchanging shots with the French out on the cold heights of Brain L'Alleud. Waterloo was won by the same Tommy, doggedly standing all day to be shot at. Similarly in the Mutiny. Honour certainly to Lieutenant Home and Lieutenant Salkeld

who blew up the Kashmir Gate at Delhi. Yes, but can you give me the name of the bugler boy who accompanied them, and sounded his bugle when the mine was fired? I could name you other defects in this precious theory. After all, why should we dub a man "hero" simply because he does his duty? Your soldier is paid and trained to fight and (perchance) die: that is his profession. Well, he fights and (perchance) dies. Let us raise a monument, my friends: let us speak of "splendid patriotism," "magnificent heroism"; or (if he fight and do not die) let us move an Address in both Houses of Parliament. That is good: but why not do the same for the architect who builds a cathedral, for the artist who paints a great picture, for the navvy who paves a street as well as he can possibly pave it? They all do their best, and possibly the soldier owes more to luck than any of the others. Why restrict our admiration to the deeds of the Killing Profession? Ah, but then, says somebody, the soldier himself runs the risk of being killed: hence our admiration. Yes, but why not then also admire the coal-miner, the sewer-man, the steeple-jack, the engine-driver? Why not raise monuments in Westminster Abbey on the military model:

ERECTED
By a
Grateful Country
to the memory of

JOHN SMITH

Who tried to do his Duty.
A Steeple-Jack for 40 years
He repaired more Mill Chimneys
than any man of his generation.

He at last fell

A Victim

to

His zeal for his Profession and

His Country

Being killed in an endeavour

To plant his Country's Flag

on the highest Mill

Chimney in

England.

All these men exercise a heroism *superior* to that of the military man, because exercised without those adventitious aids to courage possessed by the soldier: popular applause, splendid traditions, the thrill of the charge, the——

J. (*shaking me violently*).—"What on earth are you thinking about, man? You haven't spoken since we passed the Mori Gate!"

AUTHOR (*feebly*).—"Oh, I was arguing on the lines of Pure Reason."

J. (*unsympathetically*).—"Pure fiddle-stick!"

AUTHOR.—“Exactly. After all, the world isn’t governed by reason, pure or impure.”

J.—“Thank Heaven!”

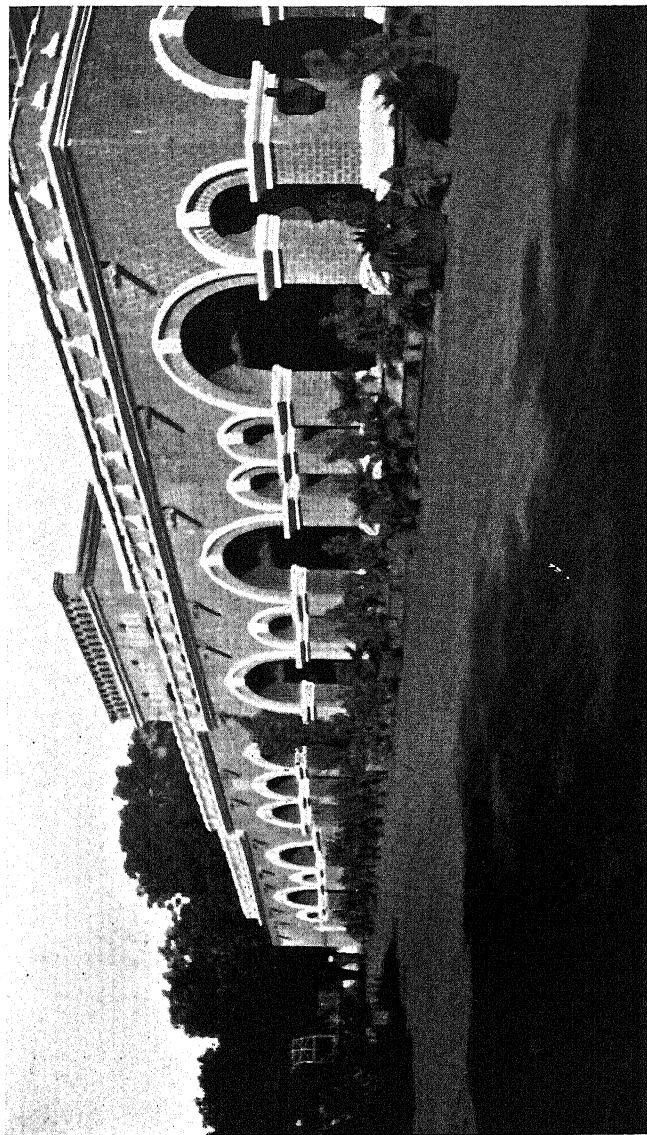
AUTHOR.—“Again I assent. Personally, I have a sneaking regard for the soldier hero: for Nicholson, and Hodson, and——”

J.—“Who denies it? Personally, *I* don’t know what you’re talking about.”

We drove through the Mori Gate and along the road to Laurie’s Hotel. The sun was bright, but not hot; the air was dazzlingly clear and pure. It seemed to me to have the intoxicating quality of alpine air. A slight hoar frost lay on the grass. It was good to be alive: and to be alive at Delhi was better still. We came to the hotel, and made a hearty breakfast.

After breakfast we discussed The Seeing of Delhi.

“Of course,” said J——, puffing at an Indian cigar, “of course we must first see the Fort. It was built by Shah Jehan in 1638. Within the Fort is the Palace, comprising the Diwan-i-am, the Diwan-i-khas, and the Moti Musjid. By the way, round the walls of the matchless Diwan-i-Khas runs the legend—



LAURIE'S HOTEL, DELHI.



' If earth hold a haven of bliss,
It is this, it is this !'

which I consider rather pretty. Then——”

J—— was on the full tide of his eloquence when gently, but firmly, I laid my hand on his arm.

“Stop!” I cried, gripping him. “Tell me where you got it.”

“Got what?” asked J——, looking sheepish.

“The guide-book, of course. You hadn't one last night.”

“Picked it up for a rupee at the station this morning,” J—— confessed; “read it while shaving before breakfast; have it in my pocket now.”

“Do you mind keeping it there?”

J—— laughed. Then he took the book from his pocket, and threw it across the room.

“That's off my mind, anyway,” he said, with an air of relief. “Fact is, I loathe guide-books, but I was tempted. Let us forget it now, and be happy.”

After some discussion we decided on our method of seeing Delhi. We would “reconstitute” the Mutiny. Afterwards we could admire the sights, as such: talk architecture, the History of the Mosques, and the

like. Both of us were more interested in the Mutiny than in the Mogul Empire: J—— because he revelled in anything extraordinarily vivid, recent, and stirring; I, well, on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle, because I am notoriously anti-militarist, and don't care for fighting men. Donning our topees, we sallied out, and instinctively made for the Ridge. The Ridge was close by; and soon we reached the Mutiny Memorial, which, I suppose, is the highest point. There we rested a while to enjoy the view.

Before us stretched a well-wooded country, almost like an English park. The ground sloped gently down from our feet. A mile or so away the city lay steeping in the sunlight: a blood-red city, belted by a wall of grey. The tall minarets of the Great Mosque stood out boldly, proclaiming the blood-red city's faith, and its three domes gleamed white against the redness. Nearer us, and on the left, the waters of the Jumna sparkled in the sunshine. Still further round, towards the north, the fertile plains of the Punjab swept away to the horizon. Along that road from the northern province sadly-needed help had come to the small British force on the

Ridge on a certain August evening nearly fifty years before. Along that same road had tramped thousands of soldiers, horse and foot; had ridden and driven many princes and peers, fine ladies and fine gentlemen, on their way to and from the Coronation Durbar not so very long before: for somewhere behind us and to the north of us lay the famous Amphitheatre; it did not much matter where—the Durbar was to us a thing of small importance.

J—— was really an authority on the Indian Mutiny, and he showed a disposition to lecture upon it. I listened; so did the old native gentleman who attended to the Memorial.

“You remember the story?” said J——, shading his eyes with his hand as he looked Punjaub-wards. “Let’s begin with the taking of the Ridge, for we can’t understand what happened in the town till we see it. On the 10th of May you have the Meerut rising. Then you have a month of paralysis: a precious month wasted through the criminal incompetence of British officers. Even now I can’t think without indignation of those first days of the Mutiny, when thousands of British soldiers were kicking their heels in the barrack-

yards at Meerut, while English men and women were being massacred a few miles away at Delhi."

AUTHOR.—"Always so with the military man—muddle, muddle, muddle."

J.—"Poor fellows! They mean well, but as a class they are not intellectually brilliant. Well, June came, and the siege of Delhi began. The British troops fought their way to the Ridge—3000 of them, with a loyal native regiment or two: and there were by this time 10,000 rebels in the city. You see the walls now: you'll see the Fort after a little. Substantial? I should think so.

"Weary weeks followed. Easy enough to reach the Ridge, but *cui bono*? The British sat down on the plain behind the Ridge and waited: there was nothing else to do. Cholera appeared, and the cemetery at the back of the hill filled rapidly. The Sepoys became bold, too; ventured right outside the city: stayed there, and moved their outposts to within a mile of ours. We were at once besiegers and besieged."

(At this point the old gentleman of the Memorial was understood to murmur "Hindu Rao.")

J.—"Oh yes; we gave the rebels a dust at

Hindu Rao's house—there it is on our left among the trees, quite close. We beat them, but lost 400 men. We could ill spare 400 men. That was about the middle of July. Followed more weary weeks: cholera, death, constant skirmishes with the rebels. A bad time for the nerves.

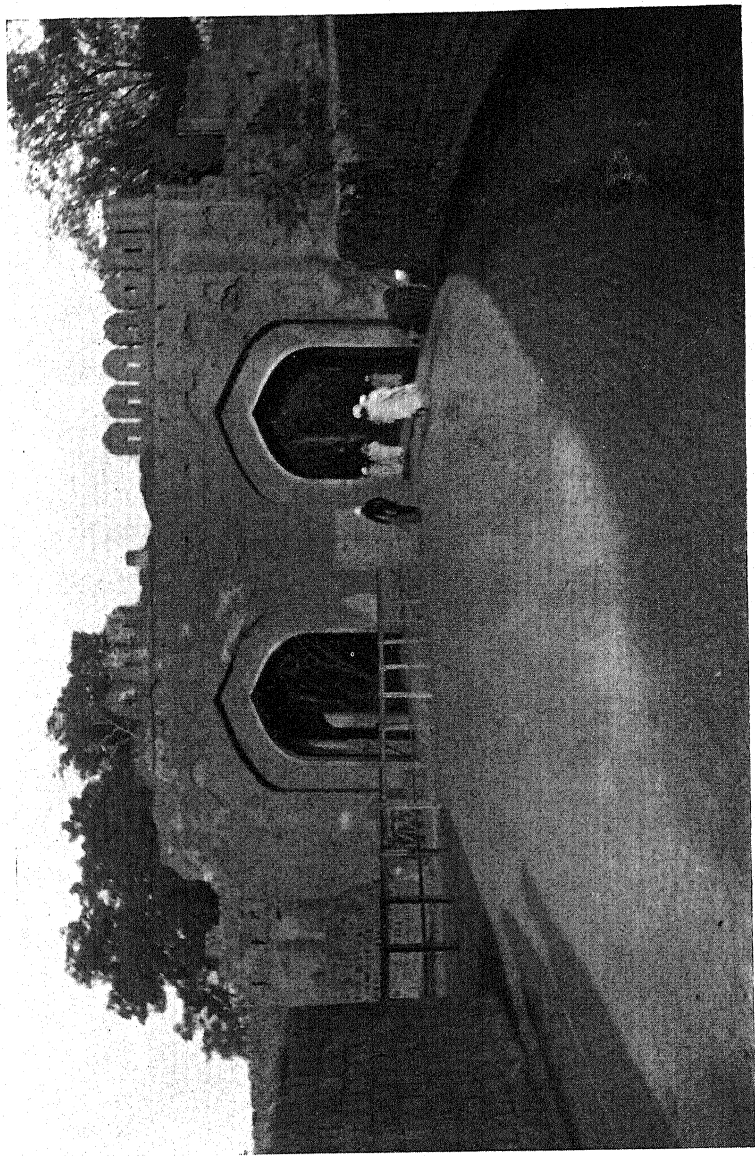
“Meanwhile up at Lahore—which is nearly 300 miles to the north of us as the crow flies—as far as from the Giant's Causeway to the Cove of Cork, and yet the nearest point from which could come any substantial help for Delhi!—up at Lahore one man had the situation right at his fingers' tips. ‘Take Delhi,’ said John Lawrence, ‘and we hold India: lose Delhi, and we lose India.’ So Lawrence made his preparations: disarmed (with the help of Robert Montgomery) his disloyal Sepoys; mobilised every available loyal regiment; organised his bullock-drawn commissariat; and last—not least—sent his fellow-Ulsterman, John Nicholson, south to Delhi.

“On 7th August Nicholson arrived at the Ridge. Nicholson was an Ulster Irishman, with all the fire of the Celt and much of the hard intellectual quality of the Lowland Scot. He was a great, but rash, soldier. As it happened,

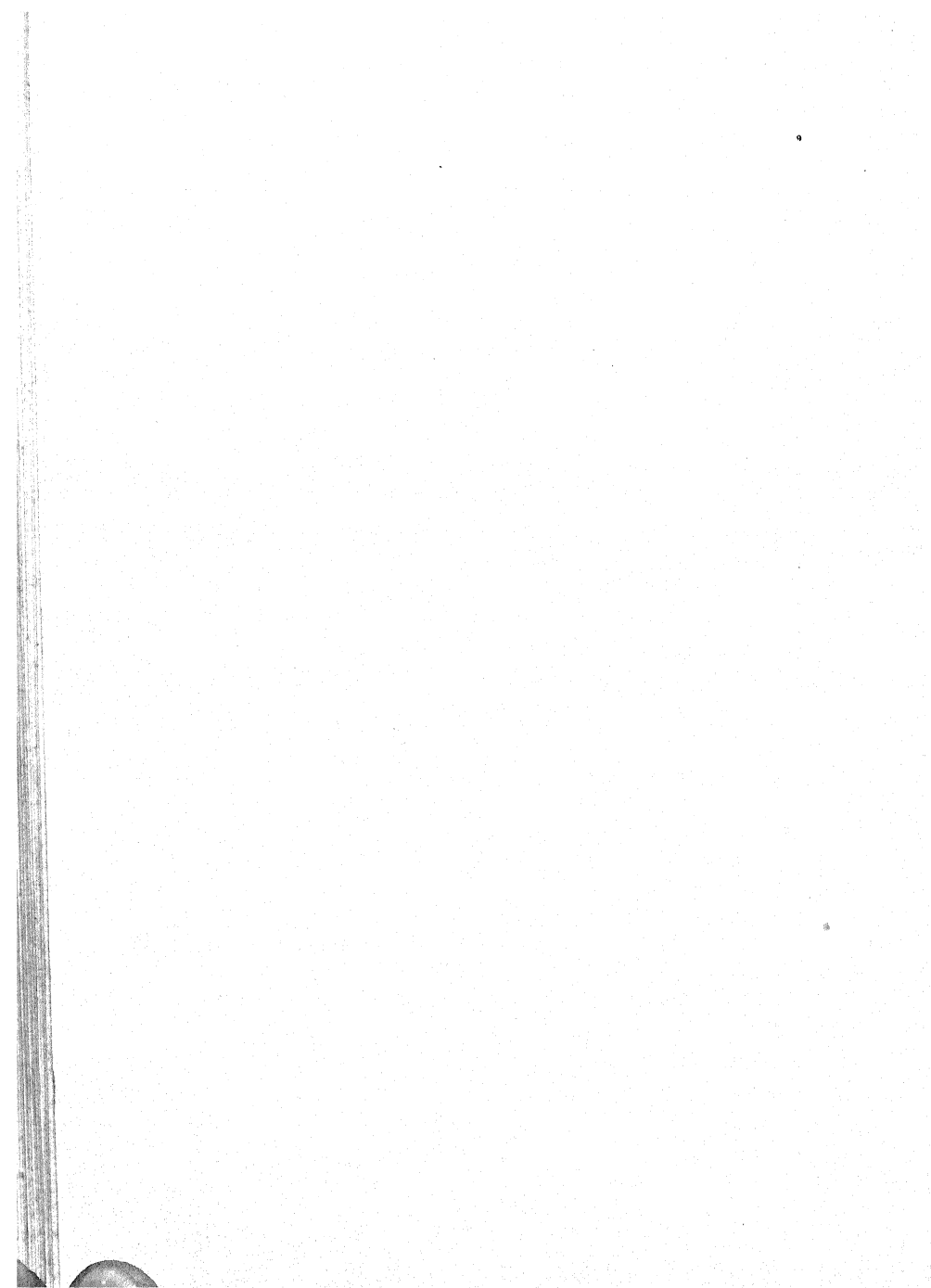
we wanted rash soldiers just then in India: the Asiatic is always demoralised by a quick, sudden blow. Nicholson came to the Camp. He had only one counsel to give—*Delenda est Carthago*. Delhi must be taken. Every man at Headquarters agreed—but one. He, however, was in command. ‘If Wilson doesn’t agree,’ thought John Nicholson grimly (he confessed so afterwards), ‘I’ll propose that he be superseded.’ Wilson finally did agree. As soon as the big guns came, they began to batter the walls. For six days they battered them, ending 13th September. The guns were mounted just about where we are standing; some below us, there in the trees by Ludlow Castle (where lived the Commissioner, Simon Fraser, who was murdered).

“*Delenda est Carthago*. On the 14th September the assault began. The British troops moved down the hill. Let us move after them, and continue our discourse *in situ*.”

J—— and I bade good-bye to the Memorial and to the old gentleman, its keeper, and started to walk to the Kashmir Gate. But by this time it was midday. When we reached Laurie’s Hotel we agreed that under the circumstances



KASHMIR GATE, DELHI.



it' would be much better to take a gari: we had so far to go: the sun was so hot. In a remarkably short time we were seated in a gorgeous equipage, with liveried coachman and footman, bowling along towards the Kashmir Gate. The natives gave us low salaams as we passed; the yellow-capped policemen stood at attention.

"After this," I heard J—— murmur regretfully, "riding on the garden-seat of a 'bus will be a tame thing."

Passing the polo ground, he resumed his discourse.

"Observe that we are now traversing the ground which was traversed by the attacking force on the 14th of September 1857. The force consisted of three columns. I should say that the 1st and 2nd columns covered this ground; the 3rd being further to the left. Now look there at the wall on the right."

We had just passed the Mori Gate: were between it and the Kashmir Gate.

"You see the breaches made by British cannon balls nearly fifty years ago." (And indeed the walls appeared not to have been touched since then.) "Somewhere about that

spot the 1st column carried the breach; and John Nicholson¹ was the first man over the wall. While the 1st column held the main-guard, close to the Kashmir Gate, the 2nd cleared the wall along past the Mori Gate, even to the Kabul Gate—round the corner on our extreme right. Beyond the Kabul Gate is the Lahore Gate. The rebels held that in force. Between the two gates runs a dirty little back lane. In that lane Nicholson fell. We shall visit the spot later.”

We stopped our gari at the Kashmir Gate. That gate is still eloquent of the siege: the crumbling masonry shows where the guns made havoc on the walls. We descended to read the inscription on the gate. It told us all one wants to know about the famous blowing up.

“And really,” said J——, “that was the beginning of the end. The 3rd column entered here and stayed. Of course, the city swarmed with rebels, and the Fort had still to be taken. Equally, of course, Wilson ‘funked it,’ and talked about retiring, whereupon poor John Nicholson, gasping out

¹ J—— was wrong here. The first man over the wall was Lieutenant Fitzgerald of the Engineers. He belonged, however, to the same nation as Nicholson: the Irish have their own virtues.

his life in the field hospital, swore that he still had strength enough left to shoot with his own hand any man who talked about retiring. There were other difficulties. Our men sacked the liquor shops, and, to put it bluntly, got drunk. I notice that Lord Roberts is inclined to discredit this, but contemporary accounts leave hardly any room for doubt. However, after some days of street fighting the city was fairly captured: and the Fort might as well have been built of brown paper for all the use the rebels made of it. The Great Mogul, no doubt deserted by the best part of his defenders, who, I suppose, slipped out over the river o' nights, ran away and tamely surrendered to Hodson at Humayoun's Tomb. Delhi had fallen. India was saved."

We got into our gari again, and drove through the Kashmir Gate.

"By the way," added J——, "you remember it was here that Lord Roberts — then Lieutenant Roberts — saw on that 14th of September 'a doolie, without bearers, and with evidently a wounded man inside.' 'I found,' he says, 'to my grief and consternation that it was John Nicholson, with death written on his face . . . On my expressing a

hope that he was not seriously wounded, he said :
"I am dying: there is no chance for me." "

We passed "Skinner's house," the church, the Magazine.

"I should like to give a lecture," said J—— thoughtfully, "on 'What really happened at Delhi'—I mean between the Meerut rising on the 10th of May and the arrival of the British on the Ridge on 8th June. I have never yet seen a decent connected account of it. Yet it is a thrilling story, though not so highly coloured as some writers have tried to make out. But here's the Magazine, anyway. It's good that they leave these old places standing: good, I mean, from the pictorial and dramatic point of view; not so good from that of wiping out memories unpleasant for both parties. You know how Willoughby and his chaps gamely blew up the Magazine after holding it for long on the off-chance of that 'little cloud of dust' on the road from Meerut which would have meant the approach of British troops. Willoughby escaped, with some of his 'chaps'—slipped out behind, along the river bank, but was murdered while on the way to safety."

We drove on till we reached the Fort.

Now, before I came to India I had a vague idea that Easterns did not build fortifications, except mud walls, and the like: they came into the field with swords, scimitars, and yataghans, and laid about them manfully. Only Westerns skulked behind walls. This theory was first rudely disturbed at Sholapur. There I saw Mohammedan fortifications for the first time. They were substantial, but not overwhelming. I had seen equally substantial fortifications in the West, even in England, which I should never describe as a fortified country. Similarly the Fort at Ahmednagar (Mohammedan) was substantial, but—again—not overwhelming. But the Fort at Delhi!

The Fort at Delhi. Yes, it might easily lend itself to lurid word-pictures. I should like to assign the task to one of the Masters of the Stabbing Style. Sharpen your quill, my friend; choose your jerkiest, crudest, most nerve-racking adjectives: cut away all smooth, lady-like, language. Let your words harrow, and stab, and burn. Perhaps thus you might convey a vivid impression of that monstrous pile of red masonry to those persons who were vigorous enough to survive your style.

Far above us towered the ruddy walls; above us, and on either side of us they stretched, massive, enormous. Here was a mighty cañon in the sandstone which they called the Lahore Gate. How high were those walls? How thick? I did not know. They were like battlements from some mediæval romance seen in a nightmare. I felt I could defend them with a pop-gun against a regiment of artillery.

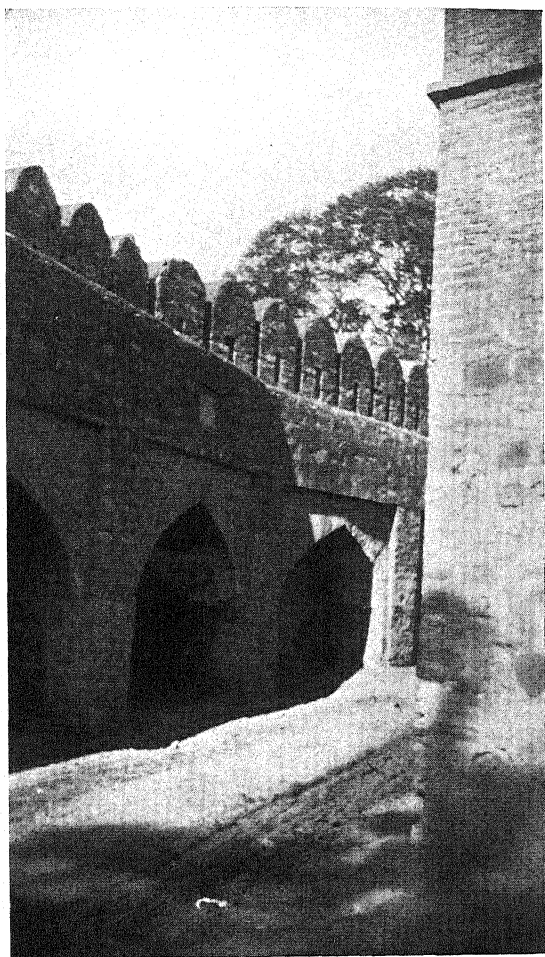
"Yet a handful of British Tommies hammering at the gate nearly sent the Mogul into a fit. If those walls didn't fall to the blast of a ram's horn, it was next thing to it."

So spake J—— as we stood, two pigmies, under the shadow of the great wall.

"I thought we Westerns were the fort builders of the world," I said feebly.

"Did you?" said J——, with a laugh. "You could put half a dozen of our fortifications inside Delhi Fort and they'd sweep 'em into a corner without noticing. Built *temp* Charles I., remember. What were we building then? Nonconformist meeting-houses. Well!"

I was eager to enter at once and see the glories of the Palace within. But J—— said no: let us finish the Mutiny first. I asked where the Mutiny "finished." He said in the little



WHERE NICHOLSON FELL.

back lane between the Kabul and the Lahore Gate. So we drove there, by way of Chandni Chauk and the Canal, and found a narrow lane running by the great wall—away from the noise of the town. It did not take us long to reach the spot where Nicholson is supposed to have fallen; some one has marked it with a tablet. The sun played upon it with a dazzling light. In silence we stood, and in silence read the tablet.

J.—“You can reconstruct the scene. Up the lane and along the wall came the British soldiers. They wavered, as well they might, for a fearful fire played upon them from the Lahore Gate. It was then that Nicholson sprang forward. A moment afterwards he fell, with a Sepoy bullet in his lung. I think on the whole he was wrong to try to lead his men up here: wrong because it was a terribly, terribly rash and hazardous thing to do. But who can blame him? Certainly not I, a peaceful civilian.”

Nicholson fell: but his work was done. Carthage was destroyed: Delhi was taken: India was saved.

APPENDIX VIII

THE MUTINY AT DELHI

ON Sunday, the 10th May 1857, the Indian Mutiny began at Meerut. Next morning before twelve o'clock bands of Mutineers arrived at Delhi. They came in a hurry, fearing a pursuit by British soldiers. But the British soldiers were kicking their heels in the barrack-yards at Meerut while, sixty miles away, the Mutineers were killing white men and women. The rebels arrived at Selimgarh, close by the Fort at Delhi, where there was a bridge of boats. They crossed the bridge, and were admitted to the Fort.

How many English were there in Delhi on that 11th of May? It is very difficult indeed to form an estimate. There were no British regiments then stationed in the city. There were three native regiments — officered, of course, by British: the 38th, 54th, and 74th Native Infantry, with one battery of Native Horse Artillery. But there were many English men, women, and children in and about the city. Unfortunately they were not concentrated. In the Palace (within the Fort) there were about half a dozen English: Captain Douglas, of the King of Delhi Guards; Rev. Mr Jennings, the chaplain,

his daughter, and her lady friends. At the main-guard by the Kashmir Gate (three-quarters of a mile from the Fort) was another batch of English: mostly women and children who fled there for safety during the morning. Scattered here and there through the city—at the Delhi College, at mission stations, and in commercial quarters—were others, men, women, and children, who either failed to realise their danger, or who, having realised it, did not succeed in escaping. Most of these people lost their lives within the next few days. Then, outside the city, in cantonments, were a number of military and civilians, most of whom escaped, first to the Flagstaff Tower on the Ridge, and afterwards to Meerut. It was this scattering of the English which proved so disastrous.

The trouble began at the Calcutta Gate by the Fort. Here were Simon Fraser the Commissioner, Mr Hutchinson the Collector, and Sir Theo Metcalfe the Magistrate. To them came Captain Douglas from the Palace. In vain they attempted to parley with the rebels. Sir Theo escaped in time. Fraser, Hutchinson, and Captain Douglas were cut down. Carried wounded into the Palace, they were there despatched. Then the Sepoys rushed to the apartments of the Rev. Mr Jennings, and put him to the sword, with his daughter and friends. Thus ends the short and terrible first scene in the Delhi drama.

The Sepoys then rushed into the city. Some of them began to sack the shops and European houses; others made for the guard at the Kashmir Gate. About that time Brigadier Greaves at the cantonment is told of the arrival of the rebels. He sends the 54th Native Infantry, under Colonel Ripley, down to the main-guard at the Kashmir Gate. There they meet the Sepoys from the Fort. There is a moment of intense excitement. The Colonel orders the regiment to charge the Mutineers. The regiment hesitates: then—incredible thing—refuses. Another moment, and another incredible thing happens: a trooper fires at his Colonel—and misses. Ripley shoots him dead with his revolver. Then Ripley himself falls, covered with wounds. Five other English officers are set upon and killed. The native regiment joins the Mutineers, and they all rush off to the Magazine, less than a quarter of a mile away. So ends the second scene.

At the Magazine (as related in the text) Lieutenant Willoughby and his men were ready. We know how they defended the position gallantly for as long as possible: how they blew up the Magazine when defence was no longer possible; and how the survivors escaped over the river. The “coronal of red dust” which accompanied the explosion was seen for miles round. At the Kashmir Gate close by two English officers saw it, and knew

its portent; these were Major Abbott and Major Paterson. Abbott was in command of the 74th Native Infantry, and had been sent by Greaves to the Kashmir Gate. He arrived after the Ripley incident, but he found Major Paterson with two guns in possession. And there they both "awaited orders." But there was nobody to give orders: no superior officer: no glorious person in gold lace: no established authority. So these two brave (but surely, stupid) men waited, and discussed the position, and wondered. Their native soldiers also waited, and wondered: grew restless, suspicious. Would nobody do anything? Then came the "coronal of red dust." Clearly something must now be done. A few words between Paterson and Abbott: then Abbott gave the order to his own men, the 74th (who were still loyal), "Form sections." "I pray you, sir," said one of his native officers, "don't trouble about sections. Get the men away quickly." And quickly they marched away to cantonments. Five minutes after leaving the gate Abbott hears firing. "What's that?" "It's the 38th, sir; they are killing their officers." "Let's go back." "Impossible, sir. We have saved you; we can do no more." It was too true. Four English officers fell immediately after Abbott had left. Others struggled through the bullets into the main-guard, where were a few terrified women. Happily, these all escaped, being let down from the windows into the ditch, and so

across the river at the ford. So ends the third scene.

I confess I have never quite been able to understand this scene (despite Mrs Steel's brilliant handling of it in "The Face of the Waters"). Why did the officers waste time in discussing the situation when every moment their men were becoming more mutinous? Possibly the answer is that they knew they could not trust their men, and that this paralysed them. But surely action of some sort was preferable to the policy of doing nothing. Again, why did Abbott march away and leave the other officers to their fate? The answer seems to be (1) that Abbott's was the only regiment which would obey orders; (2) that the officers realised this, and thought it best to get the men away from their mutinous comrades in time; (3) that the women in the main-guard could not be deserted, whatever happened. No doubt the situation was extraordinarily difficult; but one would have imagined that the proper course would have been to garrison the main-guard with the loyal regiment: it would, of course, have been too dangerous to attempt to bring the women away. In any case, one can pardon men for losing presence of mind at a moment like this.

The next scene with which we are concerned is that of the escape to Meerut. At least three parties were struggling from Delhi towards Meerut and safety. These were (1)

the party from the Flagstaff Tower on the Ridge—mostly the families of military men and civilians, with some wounded officers. After many hardships and dangers—graphically narrated by a lady of the party ("F. P.," *i.e.* Mrs Peile) in a booklet published shortly afterwards—they reached Meerut by way of Kurnaul; (2) the small party from the main-guard, who also succeeded in reaching Meerut; (3) the few gallant survivors of the Magazine. Of these the officer commanding (Lieutenant Willoughby) was murdered in a village: the others escaped. There were also one or two individual fugitives, *e.g.*, Mrs Peile, who joined the Kurnaul party; and Mr Wagentreiber, of the *Delhi Gazette*, who was lucky enough to save both himself and his family. It must not be forgotten that many women and children escaped through the good offices of natives. If there was much inhumanity amongst the natives at this time (chiefly the result of religious frenzy), there was also much humanity.

What exactly happened to the English scattered through the city will never be known. The reality was terrible enough. It has been made more terrible by highly-coloured stories which have a very slender foundation in fact. "Delicate women were stripped to the skin" (says "A Former Editor of the *Delhi Gazette*," 1857), "turned naked into the streets, beaten with bamboos, pelted with filth, etc." "Forty-eight ladies and girls," says another anonymous writer, were "kept

for a week in Delhi," and afterwards tortured to death. Fortunately there is in all probability little truth in these statements, but the reality is bad enough. From the account of a native eye-witness, it seems that "a few Europeans" took refuge in a mosque. There they were kept without water for several days, and afterwards "deponent saw them placed in a row and shot" at the bullock-sheds. The sad fact seems to be that on the first day of the rising of Delhi between thirty and forty Europeans lost their lives, including the Delhi College professors, the Bank manager and his family, some missionaries, four ensigns, and a portrait painter named Newland, who were staying at the Dâk Bungalow. On the two or three following days about fifty more died, many of them women and children. Fifty native Christians, men and women, were massacred in the Palace. The most extraordinary incident of the Delhi affair was the escape of the Aldwells. Mrs Aldwell, her two sons and two daughters, lay hid in their own house in Delhi city from 11th May till 9th September, and finally escaped to the Ridge. This surely indicates splendid fidelity on the part of her native servants. One can hardly imagine the sensations of the prisoners during those awful weeks. But Mrs Steel has imagined them for us, and brilliantly, in her novel, "The Face of the Waters."¹

¹ My friend, Dr W. W. Ireland, who was present at the siege and capture of Delhi, thinks there is no truth in this Aldwell story. It does indeed seem incredible.

CHAPTER XVII

MOSQUES AND MORALS

THE late Mr Ruskin has, in "The Stones of Venice," and other justly celebrated works, expounded at some length his theory as to the relation between architecture and character. A virile, honest, sincere man, says Mr Ruskin, in effect, will produce virile, honest, sincere work. So a virile, honest, sincere race will produce work of the same kind. Your virility, honesty, sincerity — all your good qualities — must and will come out in your work. Conversely, you cannot conceal your bad qualities. You are shallow, shoddy, vicious, insincere: very well. "I defy you," says the Ruskin theorist, "to produce anything but what is equally shallow, shoddy, vicious, insincere. I will have none of your 'art for art's sake.' What the man is, his work is: what the nation is, its work is. You boast that art has nothing to do with life: that you, a vicious man, can produce art work perfect in its purity. I deny it. Your beauty

is flawed: your pictures — poetry — architecture, of no permanent importance.” Thus the Ruskinian. You remember, for example, how the Gothic style of architecture is exalted above the Renaissance: the Gothic, so virile, even savage, so full of original force and fire; the Renaissance, so forcible-feeble, so shoddily perfect.

Now, in this matter I confess I am a Ruskinian. I do not believe that you can dissociate art from morals. But I wonder quite how far this theory carries us? Take present-day England, for example. There is as much sincere and virile life in England to-day as ever there was. I am prepared to maintain this, in spite of the protests of innumerable newspaper writers, magazine writers, authors, ministers of religion, statesmen, military men, who are just now furiously endeavouring to prove to us that — chiefly because we will not accept their nostrums — we are a shockingly decadent nation. I say I am prepared to maintain that we are not a decadent nation. When, Praiser of Past Times, when was your Golden Age in England? Having fixed on the date, kindly consult any competent historian as to the social condition

of England in that age. I cannot now stop to argue with you. Well, England is still virile: but what of her art? What, for example, of her architecture? I speak as a layman; but is there anything in modern English architecture save imitation of imitation—wearisome, rococo, combinations of old forms? Or take America. There, if you like, is the strenuous life. And also the “sky-scraper,” that fine flower of modern Anglo-Saxon architecture. From which—and other facts—I deduce the conclusion that there is an arrest in art development, along some lines, at least, in English-speaking countries. And yet, as between Harold Frederic, who believed that art was decadence, and John Ruskin, who believed that art linked itself with a vigorous life, I am of the John Ruskin faction. But I think the Ruskin theory must be supplemented by another theory; let me call it, modestly, the Author’s theory. To produce art, you must have in addition to the strenuous life, the leisured life.

“No shelter to grow ripe have we,
No leisure to be wise.”

Let the strenuous life girdle the leisured life.
Let men and women who wish to think long

thoughts, to follow beauty and truth and wisdom, have time and opportunity to do it: there will always be plenty of people to serve behind the counter. Thus, I think, will art be produced.

A JUDICIOUS READER.—“And other things as well. Prigs, for example: pedants, for example.”

AUTHOR.—“I daresay: but artists also.”

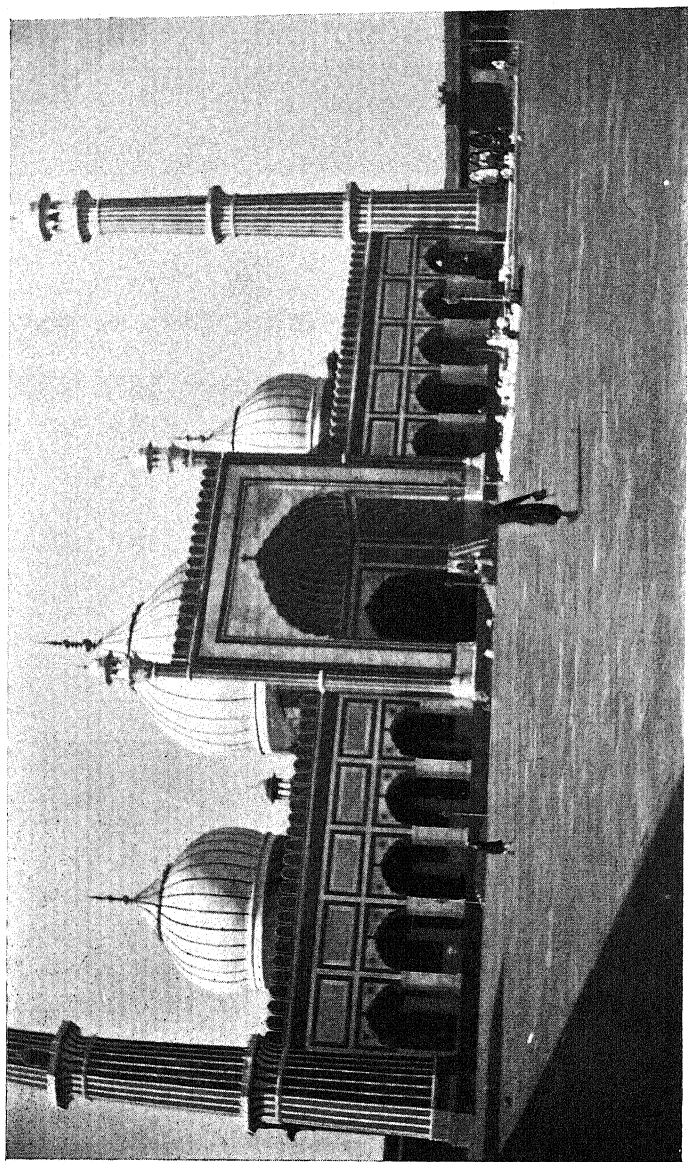
JUDICIOUS READER.—“By the way, what has all this to do with Delhi?”

AUTHOR.—“I am coming to that.”

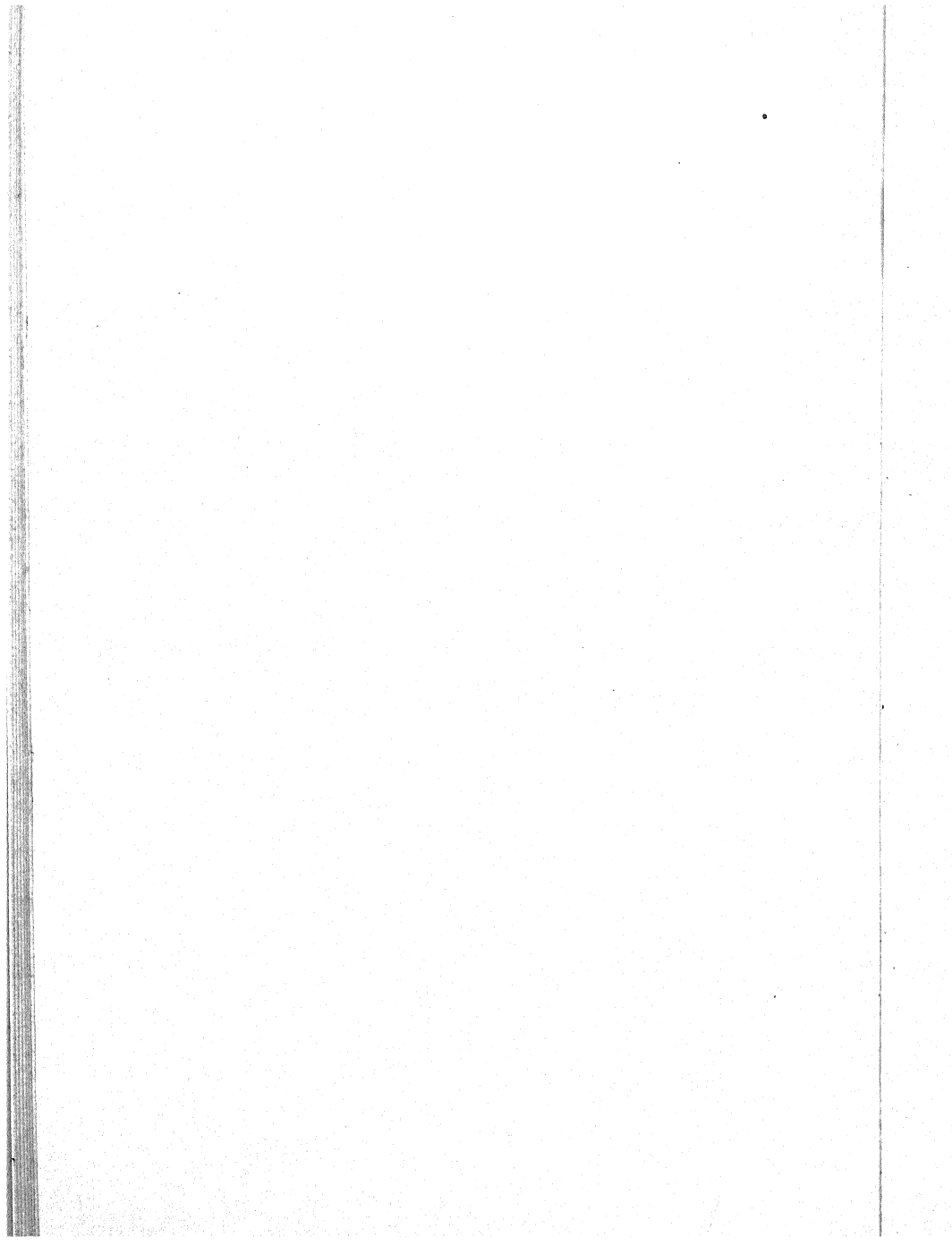
Standing by the Pearl Mosque in the Palace of Delhi; in the courtyard of the Great Mosque—the Jumma Musjid; by Humayoun's tomb—which I thought to be the most *harmonious* building, on a massive scale, I had yet seen in East or West; and later by the Taj Mahal: I wondered, in effect, how far Ruskin's theory would carry us. Judging, *à priori*, from their architecture alone, what manner of people would one say these Mohammedan invaders of India were? Look at the Great Mosque at Delhi, and make the Moguls live again. Certainly they were a proud, conquering, imperial race. Lord Rosebery has said that we Anglo-Saxons

are also a proud, conquering, imperial race. Perhaps so: but from our modern architecture what deductions could we possibly draw except that we were a money-making, earth-grabbing race, who built houses chiefly to keep out the wet? But the Moguls: look at yon proud, soaring minarets; the severe sweeping lines of the pointed arches and domes; the massive solidity of the whole structure—and yet an appearance of lightness—no miserable brick or plaster; only solid red sandstone and pure, firm, white marble. A haughty building, indeed: granting nothing to human weakness, to human fondness for the trivial or the pretty. In Guzerat and on the Deccan the mosques had been, as this mosque, perfect in design and in structure, but with a minor perfection, even as the local Mohammedan kings who built them were, though vigorous and conquering, still but miniature editions of the mighty Moguls of Delhi. But here is perfection on a giant scale. Men cast in a big mould built the great Jumma Mosque. They were also straightforward, sincere men—haters of shams. Search the world, and I think you will find no building more free from imitation than this Friday Mosque at Delhi, none more truly

what it pretends to be. Every material used is not only good, but is the best of its kind. What else? Well, this mosque is a "place of worship." Adventitious aids to worship, there are none: no silent, shadowy places; no stained glass windows; no accumulation of ornament; no turrets and gables and spires. *There is nothing mystical about it.* "This is to announce unto all people," said the builders of the Great Mosque, "that we have solved all mysteries whatsoever. There is one God, and Mohammed is His Prophet. There is nothing else ye need to know." In the sphere of the world these men were conquerors; in the sphere of religion they were conquerors too. They mounted, not hardly, but with ease, to eternal life. A Ruskin reminiscence refers to the function of the Arab in architecture as being "to punish idolatry and proclaim the spirituality of worship." No doubt. The Moguls had splendid spiritual qualities—like the Scotch Covenanters. But I should not have cared to live with the Moguls, any more than I should have cared to live with the Covenanters. I figure them as having no sympathy with weakness or with suffering; no mercy or softness; no gentle,



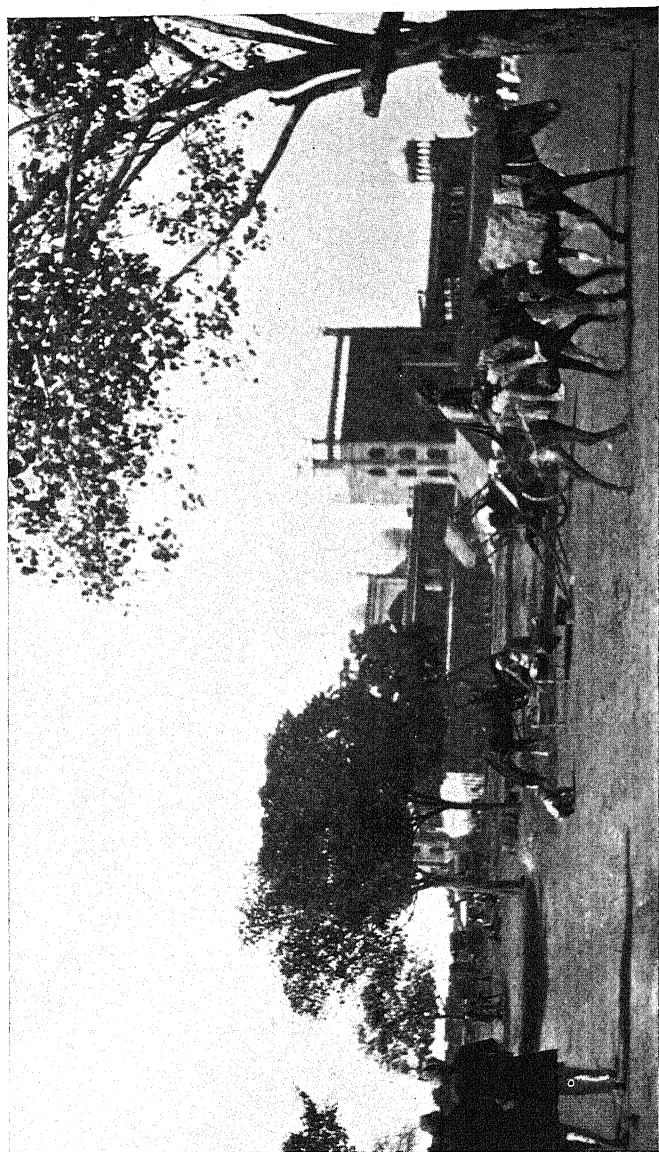
THE JAMNA MOSJID, DELHI.



adorable humanity. Thus, at least, I read the character of the Moguls from this great, splendid, flaunting mosque at Delhi.

Nevertheless, I admit I may be entirely wrong. Certainly there must have been something adorably human in the man who built the Taj Mahal as a tomb for his favourite wife. The moral is, I suppose, that you must not ride a theory to death. After all, the wind bloweth where it listeth. Art, the capacity to imagine and to shape beautiful things, comes where and when it pleases. "Flowers of good," says one of our writers, "blossom in the most unlikely places." Let us accept beautiful things without requiring strict certificates of character from the men who produce them. And let us now and then admire them without analysis: simply as objects of beauty, and nothing else. Comparisons are often made between the great buildings of the East and the great buildings of the West—futilely, as I think. I have heard of foolish people who make comparisons between the Jumma Musjid at Delhi and Westminster Abbey, Humayoun's Tomb and St Paul's Cathedral, and so on. I have seen it stated in black and white that a distinguished person, to whose opinion another distinguished person

apparently attached some importance, considers that the two most beautiful "things" he has seen in all his travels are the "Taj Mahal and Taormina in Sicily"! Fatuousness could no further go. But I was about to say that it is idle to compare the Eastern mosque with the Western cathedral, because they are as nearly as possible different in kind. You might nearly as well compare a pearl with *Lohengrin*, Titian's "Assumption" with *The Winter's Tale*. Nearly, not quite: for the acute reader will point out that you are comparing a building of stone with a building of stone—nay, further, a religious house with a religious house. But the ideas and ideals, the traditions, associations, superstitions of the mosque builders are so different from those of the cathedral builders that the finished product of each necessarily differs from the other profoundly. I know we are getting back to the Theory: but I only refer to it to emphasise one point. We of the West are so prejudiced in favour of the ideals, associations, superstitions of the cathedral builders that we are naturally and inevitably prejudiced against the finished product of the mosque builders. What the cathedral says to us, the blood in our veins



THE JAMMA MUSJID, DELHI; A DISTANT VIEW.



says to us: the mosque speaks in a distant, alien voice. Therefore let the mosque be judged as far as possible in an objective way, on lines of beauty alone. As far as possible: for our sense of beauty has its roots deep in the past, and is coloured by a million forgotten experiences of our dead forebears. And judging as far as possible in an objective way, it seems to me that the Mohammedan buildings of Northern India are in one respect — please observe that I say *in one respect*—of a superior beauty to the great Christian buildings of the West (for, of course, I exclude Ancient Greek and Roman architecture, since, no doubt, the Arabs borrowed from them)—in their simplicity. There is nothing here complex or complicated. They depend for effect on sweeping line and just proportion, and on a certain classical economy of ornament. They do not stoop to attract and enchain your attention by any meretricious arts whatsoever. “No architecture is so haughty as that which is simple: which refuses to address the eye except in a few clear and forceful lines; which implies in offering so little to our regards, that all it has offered is perfect; and disdains, either by the complexity or attractiveness of its feature, to embarrass our investigation or betray us into

delight." Thus the author of *The Stones of Venice*. I am not aware that he had Mohammedan architecture in his mind when he wrote these words; but the words apply to Mohammedan architecture in its days of strength. That architecture is haughtily simple, proudly plain. If hauteur and pride attract you, you will be attracted by these famous buildings in and about Delhi; if humility, tenderness, and a soft beauty, then you will not be sad to take leave of them. There are people who love rugged mountains, and rocky coasts, and everything in nature that is grand and stern and forbidding. They look with a slight impatience and contempt upon those whose heart is given to lakes and woods, rivers and quiet pastures. They may be right. For my own part, I am a woods, rivers, and quiet pastures man. I would barter the Giant's Causeway on any day for the Vale of Avoca. I must summon all my firmness of mind really to enjoy anything grand, stern, magnificent. Lamentably enough, I love small things (including women), and am quite prepared to leave the big things to stronger characters. All of which, considered with reference to the mosques and tombs of Delhi, is, in a manner, allegorical.

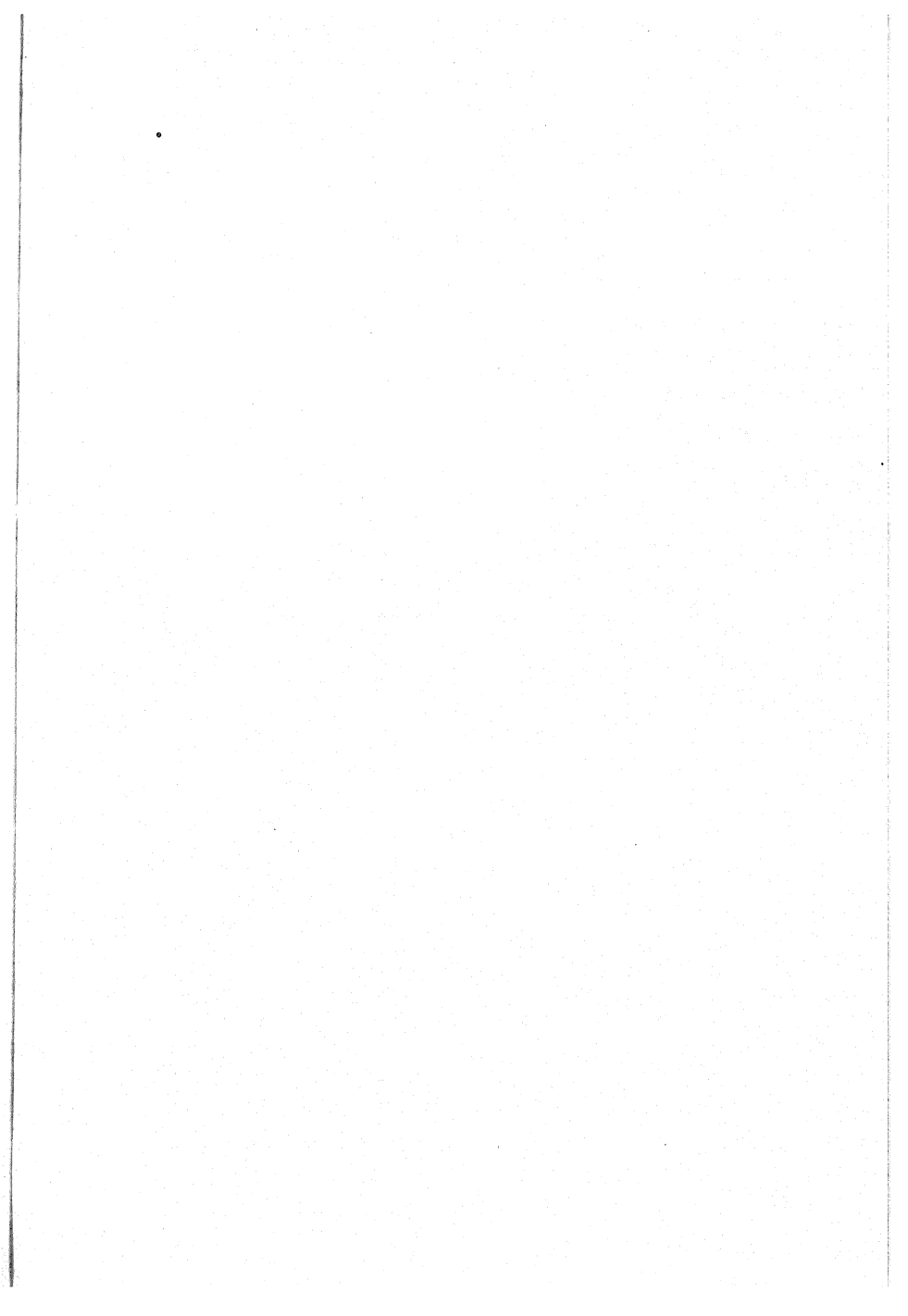
CHAPTER XVIII

PIECE GOODS

My neighbour at dinner was a commercial traveller, and came from Manchester. It gave me a shock to discover a commercial traveller at Delhi. Why did he interfere in this romantic city of Mutiny and Mosques? To do him justice, my friend thought and troubled little about either Shah Jehan or John Nicholson. He regarded Delhi as a place where you sold piece goods. You squatted all day by an open sewer (so he designated the business thoroughfare), and smoked vigorously to kill the smells, while, after a great deal of talk about some Oriental Shakespeare - and - the - musical glasses, you booked a stray order or two for piece goods. My friend rolled the phrase "piece goods" in his mouth like a choice morsel. "Thirty-five pound a case," he confided to me, "and these fellows from Bradford booked orders in a week for how many cases, do you think? 'Thousand. That's what I call good business. Ah, there's a big market here if

we English would work it properly. Look at those chaps over there!" The commercial man pointed to a neighbouring table, where a party of noisy Germans were drinking beer. "These fellows are travellers for German houses. They stick here all the year round, hot and cold. We English chaps come out in the cold weather, and hurry back to England before the heat. More comfortable? Of course, but what about business? And, mind you, the natives *would rather have* English goods: ay, and Englishmen too, though I say it." He spoke much about the English, the Germans: most about piece goods. He was himself going on to Lahore, Rawal Pindi, Peshawur, bearing right up to the wild Afghan frontier those Lancastrian blessings of civilisation. I murmured that I regarded him as a missionary of Empire. He seemed pleased. "It's all very well," says he seriously, "talkin' about fightin' men, *but give me a few cases of piece goods.*" I could not disagree with him. It appeared that he had given an epigrammatic summary of human progress: the triumph of Piece Goods over Politics.

At Delhi you are not disinclined to subscribe to the piece goods theory. Between the city





ASOKA'S PILLAR, OLD DELHI.

and the Kutb Minar is a distance, say, of eleven miles : eleven miles of monstrous ruins, desolated cities, immense crumbling fortifications ; vast shapeless mounds of earth that cover unknown wrecks of masonry, with here a perfect mosque preserved, and there an exquisite tomb. They say that each new conqueror built a new Delhi for himself. There came Tuglak, and built Tuglakabad ; Firoz Shah, and built Firozabad ; Shah bin Tughlak, and built 'Adilabad. They had a great imperial way with them, these sons of Islam. Nothing smirched with another's name was good enough for them. Last of the great ones—for our purpose—came Shah Jehan, who built himself Shah Jehanabad, which is modern Delhi. That was when Charles I. was king of the small realm of England. There is as yet no sign of Piece Goods. Sword followed sword, and the land ran blood. The Mogul power waned. Persia and Afghanistan made small temporary raids on Delhi, and spilled some more blood. Then came the Mahrattas, flowing back over the country which once their fathers held, and (blood again) the Moguls were dethroned. But no new Delhi was built. Then a flourish of trumpets, and

enter Thomas Atkins. Behind him I already discern Piece Goods. Thomas, being a humane man, and the Mahrattas being, possibly, degenerate, less blood was spilled on this occasion than usual. However, the blood having been wiped up, Thomas installed himself in the Fort, and is there still. No new Delhi was built, Thomas believing that the old would last his time. The honest fellow brought no arts in his train; but I would like you to remember that he brought Piece Goods. The man from Lancashire appeared with samples. He opened his cases, and waited. Men forgetting to fight, began to trade, timorously at first, I daresay, fearing lest the sword might soon flash again. But Thomas, keeping watch in the strong place of Shah Jehan, shifted his quid from one cheek to the other and said not if he knew it. The Piece Goods era opened. It is still in its infancy: I am not sure that I should altogether welcome its lusty manhood, or be a loyal subject of Piece Goods, *Rex et Imp.* But if a less romantic, he is also a less sanguinary ruler than the Mogul, and it is but a scurvy romance the foundations of which are cemented by blood. Did I say

"less sanguinary"? Well—I hope so. Piece Goods has his victims, too. There are more ways than one of shedding blood. Doubtless the gentleman is worth watching.

J—— dissented somewhat vehemently from these sentiments, holding that a reign of industrial tranquillity was poorly purchased if meantime a nation lost its soul. "I would rather," he said warmly, "I would rather see the Mogul's bloody sword again dripping over this land, so that men really felt they had something to live for and die for. Your mean Lancashire shopkeeper," says he, "has nothing either to live for or die for. All the wretched creature cares for is his cash-box, to protect which he hires a policeman."

AUTHOR.—"You, a poet, advocate a reign of blood?"

J.—"No; I only advocate the holding of great and (possibly) beautiful beliefs, in defence of which you would be willing to shed blood. Nowadays we only believe in——"

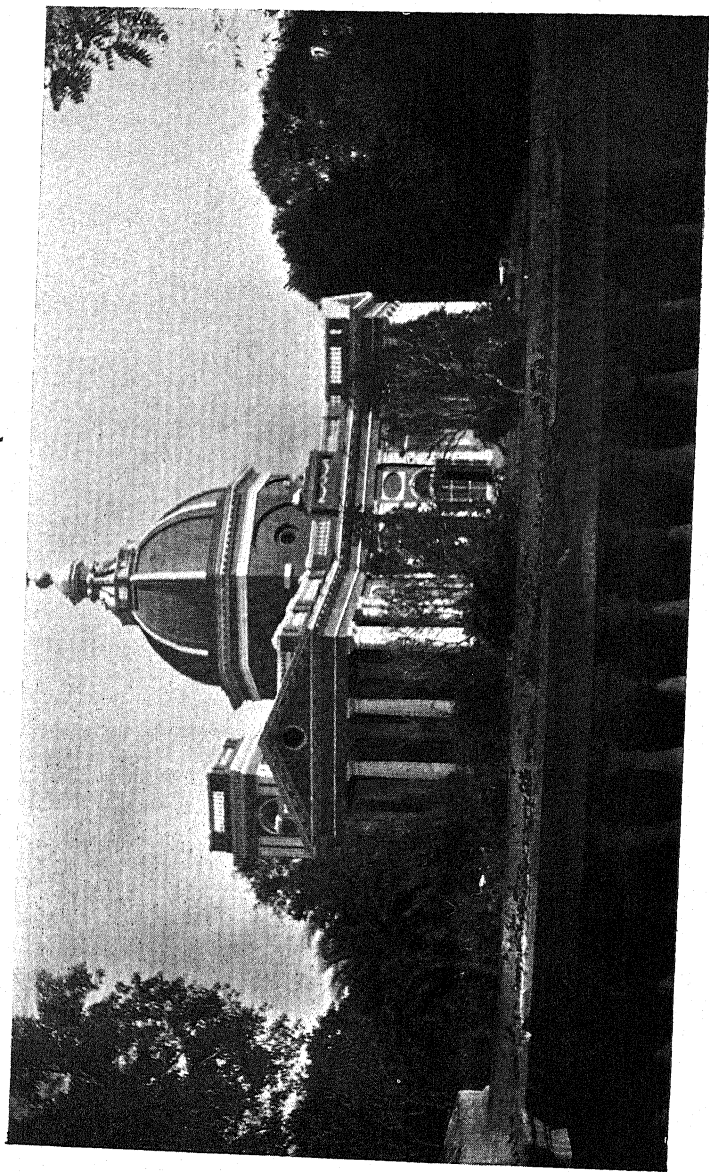
AUTHOR.—"Piece Goods."

J.—"For which, it is true, we are willing to shed blood."

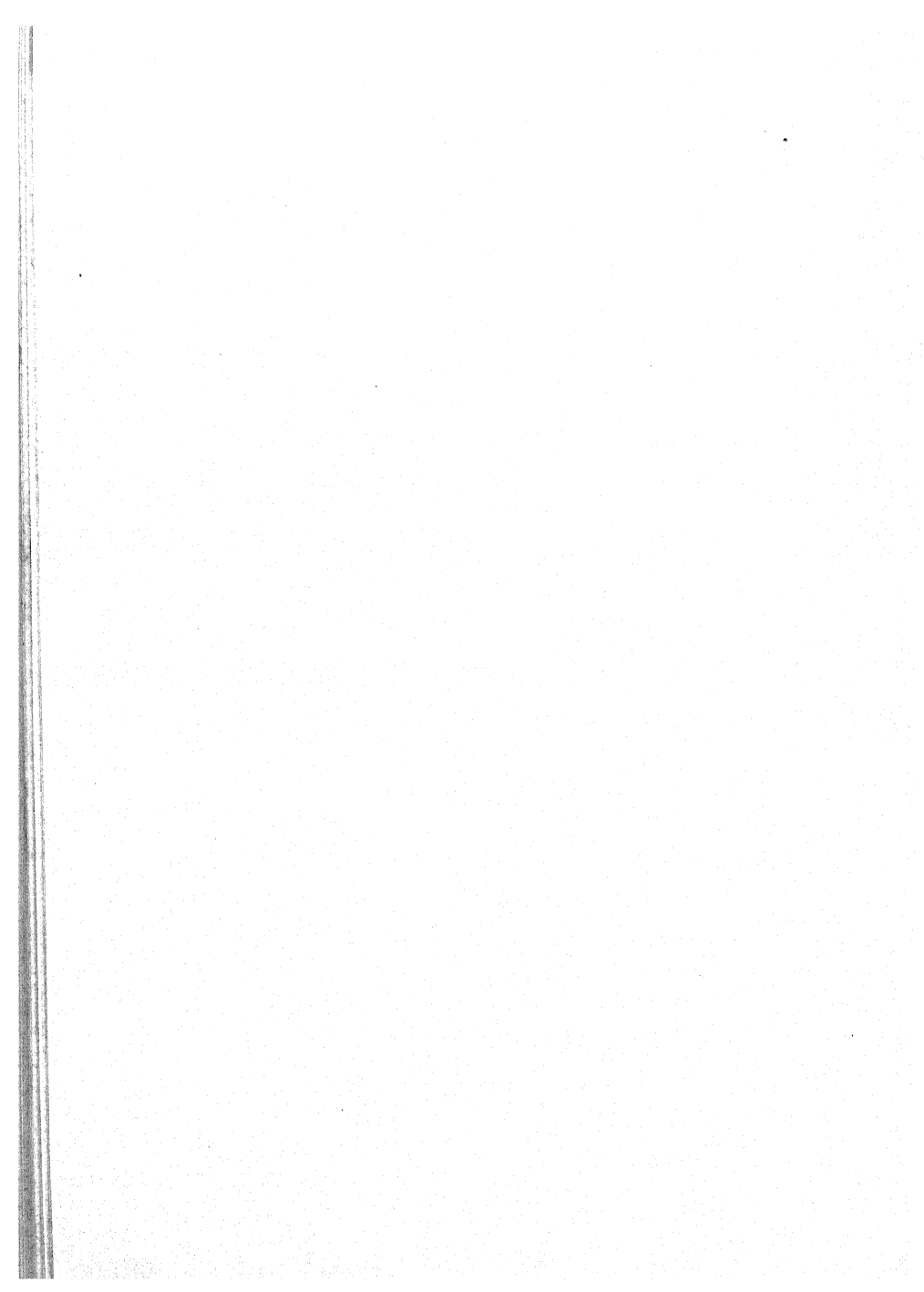
AUTHOR.—"And for nothing else."

Somewhere or other Robert Louis Stevenson

speaks of "sifting and straining" one's experiences before making a record of them, so that only the essentials, the really striking part of them, remain. Even so, he says, the painter looks at the landscape through half-shut eyes, in order that he may eliminate the unimportant detail from the picture. I will ask the reader to believe that we did all the orthodox things at Delhi: visited the buildings that ought to be visited; admired the sights that every respectable person should admire. But it is the trivial and unimportant things that remain in the memory. Perhaps it is these trivial and unimportant things that Stevenson regarded as the essentials. And in one respect they are the essentials: they keep the picture fresh in one's mind. On Sunday evening I visited St James's Church. This church was built by Colonel James Skinner, "in fulfilment of a vow made while lying wounded on the field of battle, and to show his belief in the truth of the Christian religion." James, however, was an impartial person. He also built a mosque across the way, possibly "to show his belief in the truth of the Moham-medan religion," but more probably to please his Mohammedan wife: his Christian wife being



ST. JAMES'S CHURCH, DELHI.



already gratified with a church. A handful of English were gathered at the service: troops from the garrison, civilians from the cantonment, bronzed men and pale-faced women and children. We joined in the prayers and responses; sang the hymns; listened to a tolerable sermon. And I had all the time that curious feeling of being an alien, of really having no business in that galley.

Many thousands of miles away, our friends were worshipping the same God after the same manner. That seemed natural and right. They worshipped the God of the West, whom we would fain believe to be the God of the whole earth. But here we were in the East: among fanatical peoples whose ways were not our ways, and whose gods were not our gods. Outside was a great city of what we call heathendom: a city of fierce Moslems who could not love the infidel; of Hindus, milder indeed, but still men who turned with emphasis from the English God to their own deities. Why were we here, we aliens from over the sea? Why did these peoples permit us to remain, flouting the gods of their idolatry, outraging their religious sentiments, their social

prejudices? *Force majeure*? Well, there were two companies of British soldiers in the Fort—and a hundred thousand fanatical Mussulmans in the city. There were also native regiments in their lines, officered by white men: regiments whose duty it would be to shoot down their own kith and kin if, and when, ordered to do so by these white men. Prestige is a curious thing: so I mused as I walked along in the darkness, under the stars and silences. The service was over. We had finished by singing “God Save the King,” which, let me tell you, has a fine effect when sung thus by a remnant eight thousand miles from home. The service was over, and the aliens were dispersing. My way lay along by the city wall. Upon Delhi—city of magnificence and bloody splendour—the silence of night now rested. From somewhere in the distance came at intervals the monotonous sound of a tom-tom. The road on which I walked was deserted and dark. A certain sombre air seemed to brood over the place. Would there ever, I wondered, be another Mutiny? Would those fierce Mohammedans and extraordinarily alert Hindus ever again unite to crush the foreigner—to crush him even as

a man closes his hand to crush a butterfly? On this evening I thought it not unlikely. Who, comparing that handful of white men and women in church with the crowded multitudinous city, and remembering that the same thing repeated itself over and over again in India, could think otherwise than that the British occupation of India was but a temporary phenomenon? Whether our time in India be long or be short depends on ourselves. Whether the final rupture be violent or peaceful also depends on ourselves. What is certain is that, to put it on the lowest plane, it is to our interest to rule India with justice — and with more than justice: with sympathy and understanding. Many men believe in a policy of kindness and conciliation; and of these are the really great and wise rulers of mankind. Most men, alas, believe in nothing but force. The last lesson they learn is that force defeats itself, is, indeed, by way of being a hopelessly discredited agent in human affairs. But of these are the ordinary bureaucratic rulers of mankind. They are the men who make mutinies at home and abroad. When they happen to be in other countries than our own we call

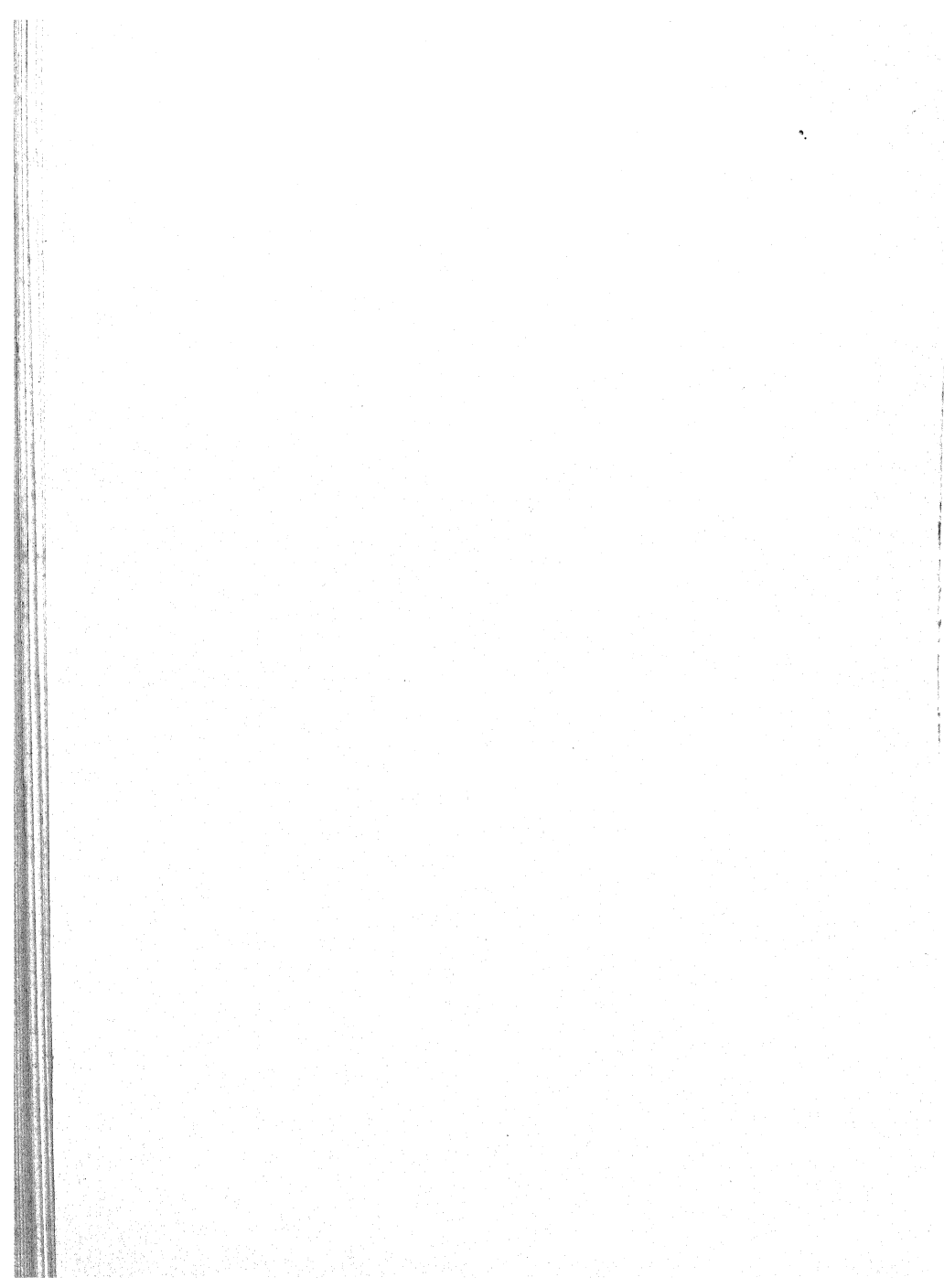
them "tyrannical bureaucrats"; when they are in our own country, they are generally referred to as sane, sensible men, with no nonsense about them.

This was the sermon I preached to myself as I skirted the Kudsiya Gardens. The tomtom was becoming more insistent; its dull, throbbing note came drifting through the trees from the top of the Ridge. And the road was no longer deserted. Every now and then lights flashed in the darkness, and a little country cart rattled past laden with a small but jocund crew of merrymakers. The driving of these vehicles was so uncertain that I had some difficulty in avoiding personal collision with them. I wondered what it meant. Finally, I cross-questioned a native who happened to be passing. It was a festival, he said. A festival? "Yes: they go to the temple; they bring offerings to the god." Which god? "Oh"—something or other—"Son of Kali." With a "Salaam, Sahib," the man went on his way, and I on mine, pondering on the permanence of the worshipping instinct in mankind.

At four o'clock next morning I was awakened by the *kitmatgar*, bringing hot tea. It was



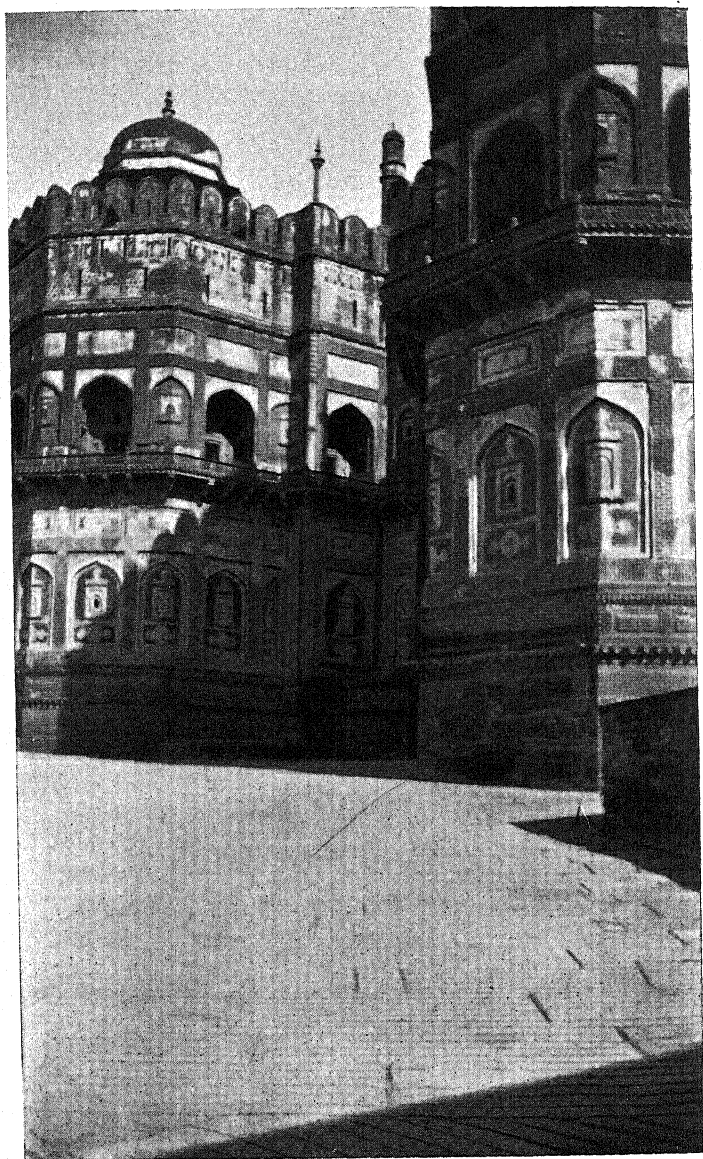
ON THE WAY TO THE TEMPLE.



pitch dark; the cold stung face and hands as I sat up to drink the tea. I dressed in a hurry, donning a heavy overcoat, and wrapping a travelling rug round me; but still it was cold. In the passage I stumbled against J——, who was vigorously denouncing the low temperature. Indeed, it had no business to be so cold in India. As we left the hotel, thinly-clad figures in white rose round us dimly in the darkness. I wondered how the poor fellows kept warm. "Backsheesh!" they murmured timidly; and there were soft cries of "Sahib!" "But, good heavens!" said I, "we can't possibly give backsheesh to *all* of you!" "Alls," they murmured plurally, but sadly. We distributed some small coins among them, and got into the gari. The figures melted again into the darkness. I hope they were not dissatisfied. So we drove along in darkness and silence to the station. And at the station we met the civilised Western world again: railway trains, gas lamps, the shrieking of engines, sounds of escaping steam; also, a ticket collector, whose name I do not know, but who deserves to be remembered.

While we waited for the train, he spoke of

Delhi: of its long and storied history, its traditions of splendour. He had personal preferences. "Aurangzebe I do not much care for, nor even for Akbar or Shah Jehan. But Babar" — the ticket collector dwelt for a moment on the word—"Babar was the great man: the pioneer, you see. Those others, they reaped where he sowed." The collector briefly dismissed the Pathans. "Architecture, of course: did not one of your writers say that they 'built like Titans, and finished like jewellers'? But the Moguls built up a civilisation: they founded a dynasty." We drifted down the ages till the coming of the English. Did the collector regard the British raj as a blessing or an infliction? He refused to commit himself. He opined that the British raj was a fact. He had his own views of the future. Meanwhile, he studied history, and would be glad of books, of pamphlets—The train arrived as we spoke, and I had to bid the collector farewell. I left him to his history and his dreams; and I wondered when I should meet a ticket collector in England like him.



THE FORT AT AGRA: ENTRANCE GATE.

To face page 279.

CHAPTER XIX

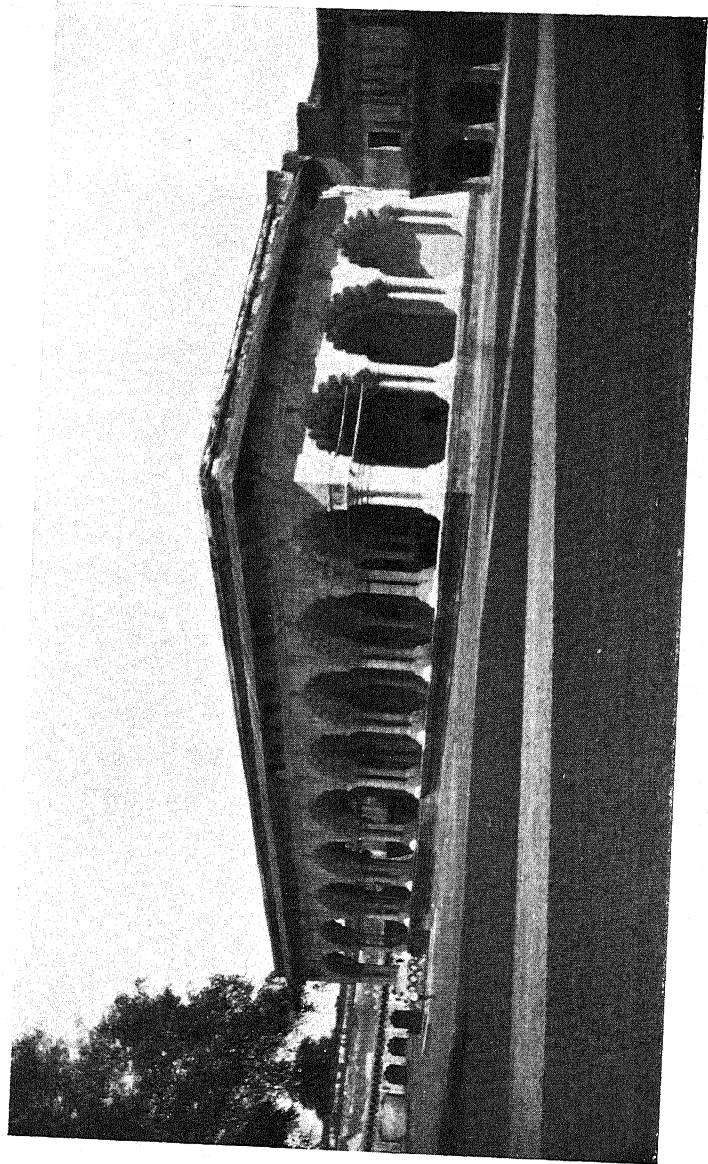
THE TAJ MAHAL

THE Fort at Agra is more Titanic, more overwhelming, than the Fort at Delhi, and therefore ought to be described in a still more riotous and highly-coloured style. But see how your literary artifices fail you. At Delhi an astonishing piece of Mogul masonry impresses your imagination. You call out troops of adjectives, and battalions of notes of admiration. "That is how I describe the Fort at Delhi," you say in effect to the (perchance) bored and yawning reader. You journey on to Agra, and behold a still more astonishing piece of Mogul masonry. How to describe it? Your adjectives have been already mobilised and have gone into action; your battalions of admiration-stops are under arms in another quarter. You have no reserves. It is vain to issue a proclamation: we regret to inform your majesty that every available epithet has been already used in Chapters XV., XVI., etc., etc. You had better capitulate at once.

"But now you mention it," says the Judicious One, "I don't think you *did* describe the Fort at Delhi. You fobbed it off on somebody else : on some mythical master of what you called the Stabbing Style. Be a man, and tell us something about Agra."

Sorrowfully I admit on recollection the justice of the criticism. It is indeed like me to baulk at the last moment : to lead the Judicious One up to an architecture gem, and then plead an important engagement, or pretend that some unknown person is quite willing to do the descriptive part. On my honour, I thought I had said something about the Delhi Fort, and I thought also that it estopped me from describing the Agra Fort. And I know I shall be in a wretched plight when I come to describe the *TAJ MAHAL*, as I suppose I must before the close of the present chapter. (You observe I am putting off the evil moment as long as possible.)

But as I have indicated, the Agra Fort impressed me even more than the Fort at Delhi. Its walls are higher, redder, I believe, —thicker, longer. And the Palace within the Fort is larger than the Delhi Palace : the Dewan i'Khas, the Pearl Mosque, all the



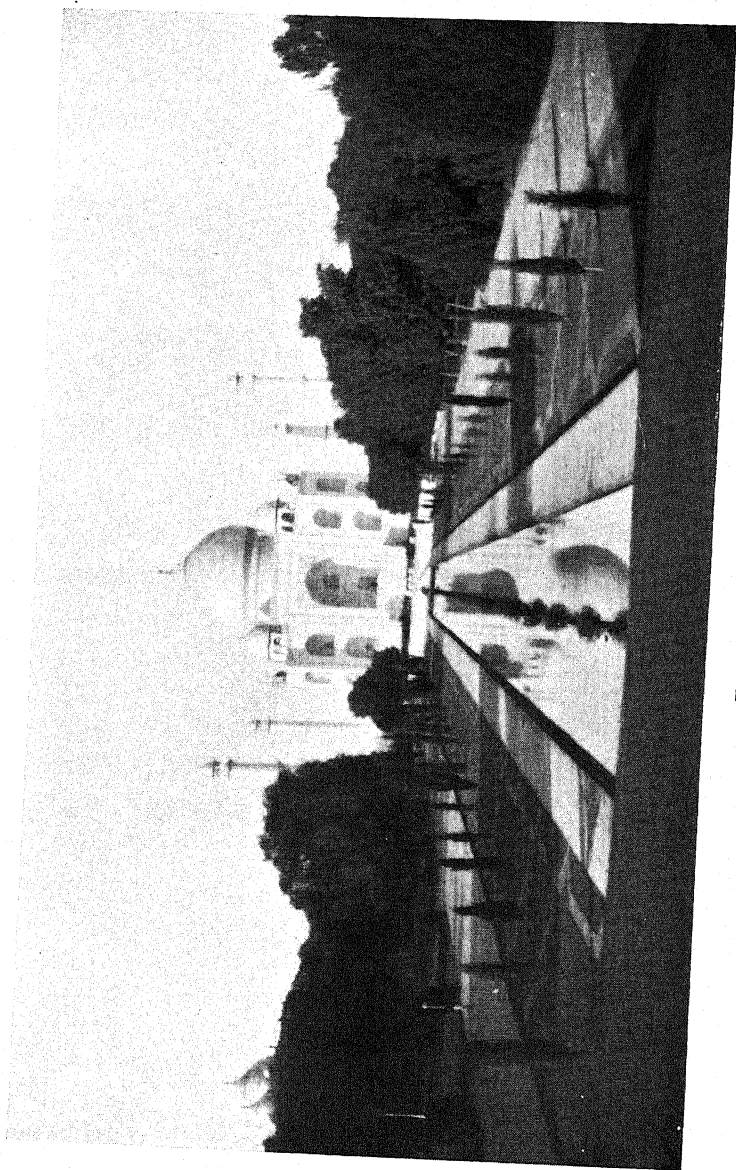
AUDIENCE HALL : PALACE OF AGRA.

Court apartments and appurtenances are on a more extensive scale. Because they were larger, I liked them less than those at Delhi. As I have already hinted, I am no megalomaniac, and think the love of magnificence the mark of a spacious but barbaric mind. Civilised men know that the footrule is not the only test of merit. Was Shah Jehan a civilised man? He built the Fort at Delhi, and also the Palace at Agra. We have heard of modern men who think in continents: Shah Jehan thought in fortifications. In his leisure moments he imagined a masterpiece like the Taj Mahal, and no doubt superintended its building. Civilised or not, Shah Jehan must have been a very great man: after his fashion, of course, and after the fashion of his day. In another light it is possible to regard him as a gigantic and extremely successful Slave Driver. And—again, of course—we are too civilised and too humane nowadays to look with anything but horror upon slavery and slave-driving: our nerves won't stand it. It is better from all points of view to refer to "indentured labour."

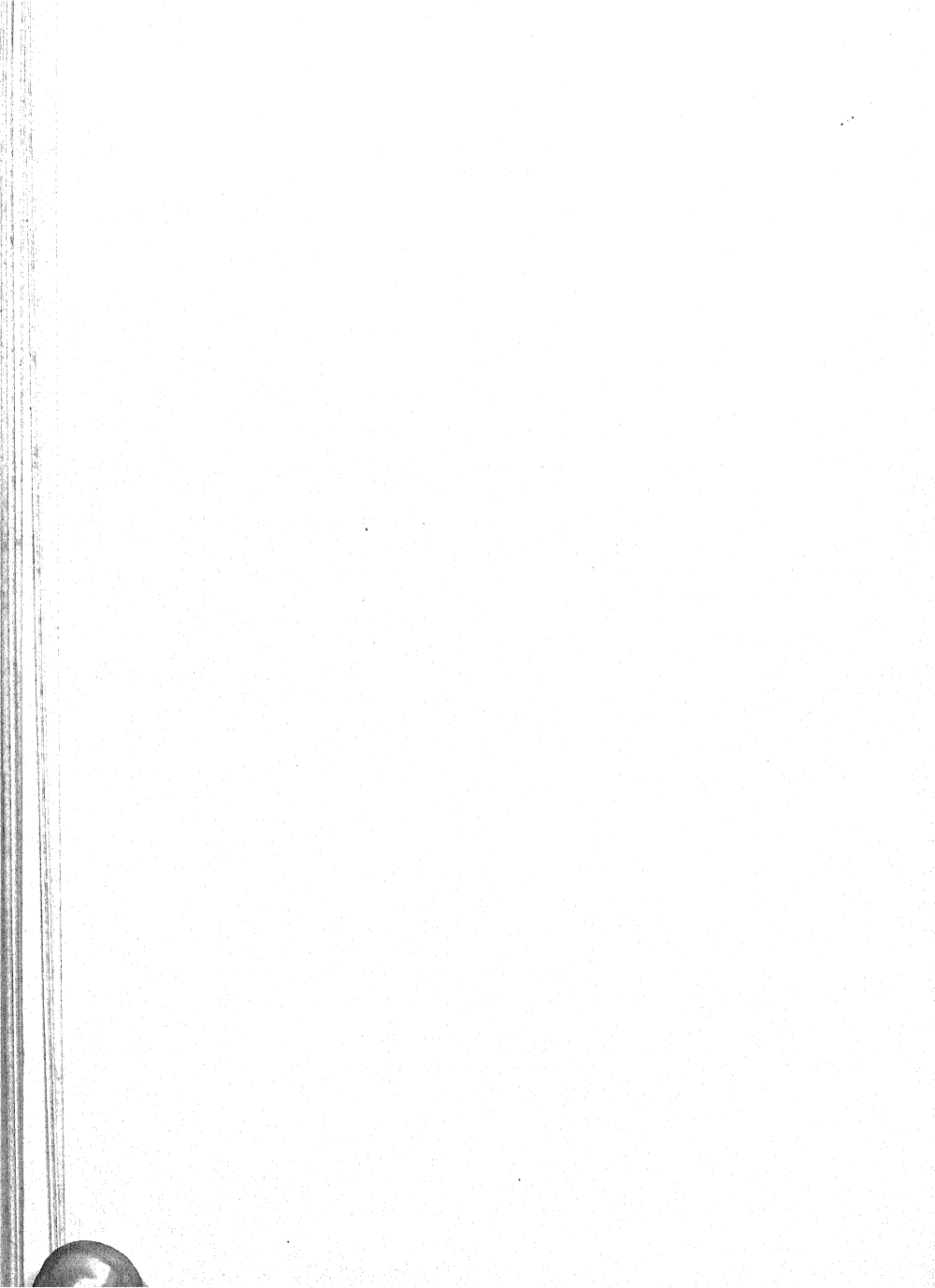
The plain truth is, however, that the Taj

overshadows everything else at Agra: it overshadows the place, and the atom which is you. Until you have seen it, have dreamed in its gardens, lingered by its exquisite tombs, and perchance climbed its minarets, you feel that you have no business to be happy, or to appreciate other and minor buildings. I do not say that this is a right feeling. On the contrary, I think it a wrong feeling, for the happy life is not necessarily the life of great moments and violent sensations. But the Taj is the local deity at Agra; to it you must pay homage; and till you have done so, worship at other shrines is but half-hearted and insincere. In short, and to be perfectly plain, our inspection of the Fort and Palace at Agra was of a somewhat perfunctory nature.

Nevertheless, it was from the Fort that we first caught a glimpse of the Taj. An interesting essay could be written on First Glimpses. Your first glimpse of St Paul's, hanging over the smoke of London (it was from Kensal Rise I got it, and my age was one-and-twenty); of the East — Port Said, perhaps, rising from the sea; of the Pyramids. Is it not worth all the books that ever were



THE TAJ MAHAL: AGRA.



Written, and all the pictures that ever were painted—that first flash upon the outward eye, which is the miniature you keep ever afterwards for the inward eye? We first saw the Taj from Shah Jehan's Fort. Before us, and just beneath, the Jumna rolled its calm, broad waters. Beyond was a wide champaign, level, well-wooded, with here a tomb in the picture, and there a temple. Down on the river's bank, about a mile away, we saw the white, dream-like building which was the Taj Mahal. Aëry and fæery it looked: such a magic-casemented building as Keats himself might have imagined—

“opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.”

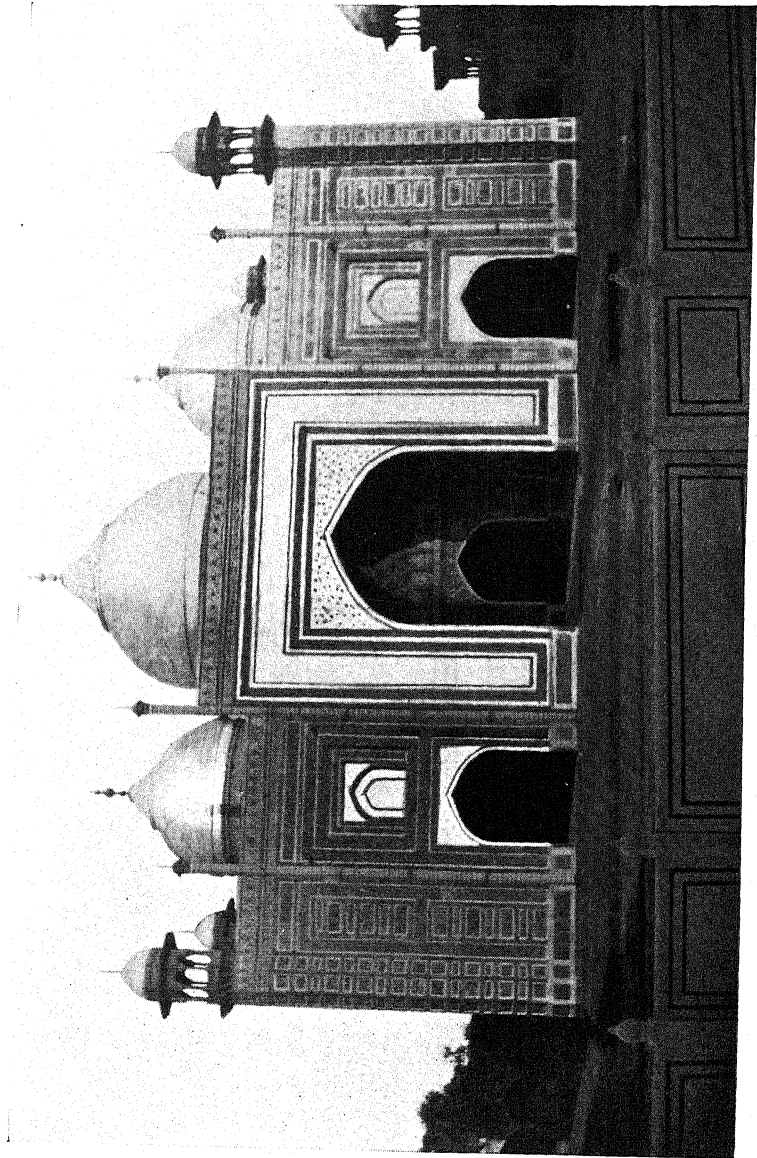
This, remember, was a distant view. Remember, too, that what we saw was a vast, but perfectly proportioned structure of purest white marble glistening in the sun. You will agree that the effect could hardly be other than uncommon and unearthly. But I desire to be accurate. This glimpse of the Taj we had, leaning over the wall at the Fort of Agra now many months ago. My diary tells me nothing of my actual sensations at the moment. Possibly I was hungry; it may well

be that I was fatigued with my investigation of the Fort; I can conceive it as quite likely that—at the moment—I looked at the Taj with lack-lustre eye, and perchance wondered if it could be photographed at that distance. But now I remember only the “first flash”; and I put down what I imagine to have been my sensations at that great moment. I refer to the Taj as dream-like, æry, fæery. It may well be that none of these adjectives is justified.

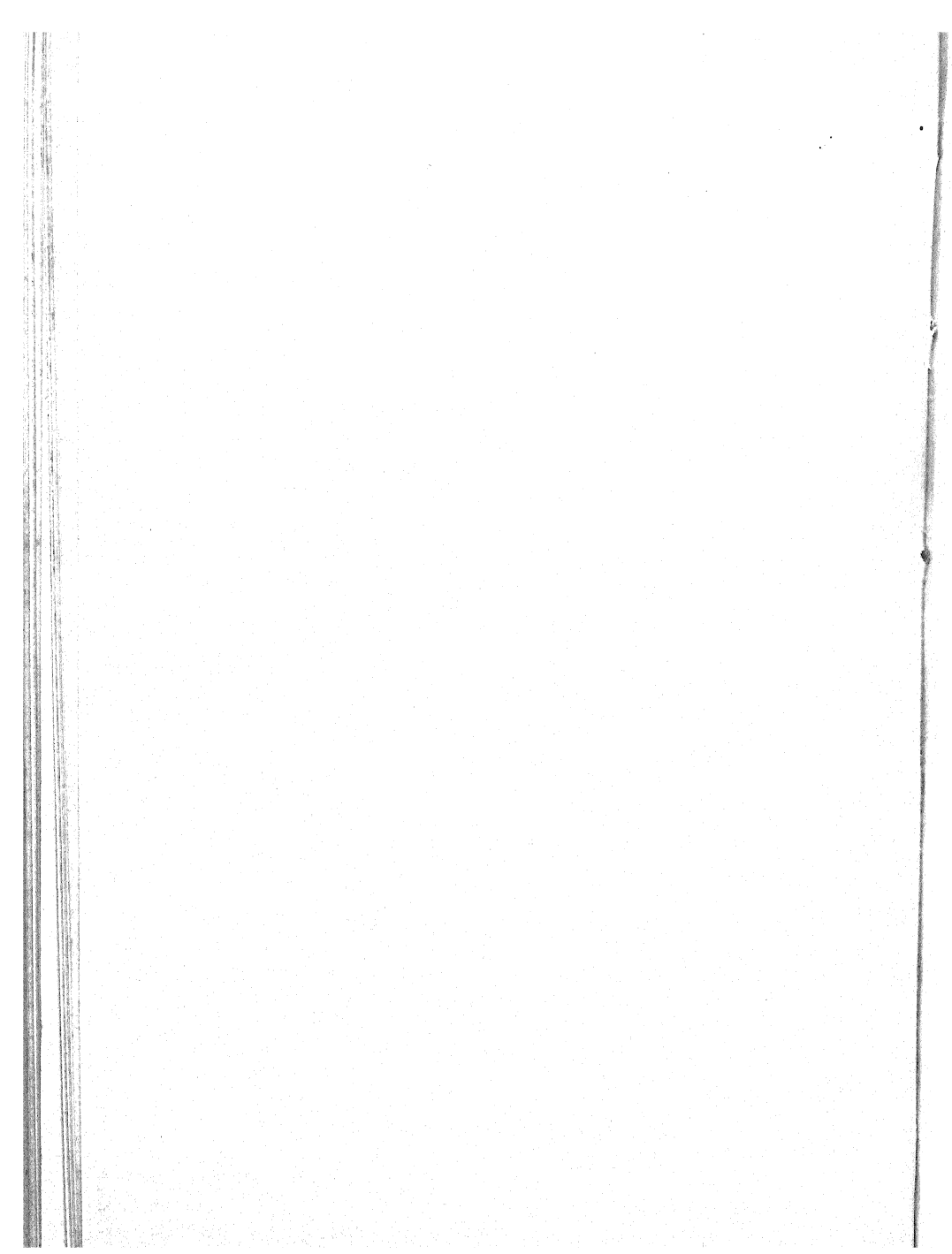
I desire to be accurate. J—— and I discussed this very point as we drove out to visit the Taj on the same afternoon. J—— was inclined to support the rhapsodists. “Let them rhapsodise,” said he. “Rhapsody is the natural manifestation of the natural man when he is confronted by something which he knows vaguely he ought to admire, but which he doesn’t really admire.”

“But why should a man, natural or otherwise, pretend to admire what he doesn’t admire?”

“Because,” said J——, “the natural man doesn’t really admire *anything* abnormal—it makes him uncomfortable; all great art is abnormal, in the sense that it is far removed from the accustomed life, being far more



MOSQUE AT THE TAJ MAHAL.



beautiful, intricate, and charged with meaning than the accustomed life."

AUTHOR.—"I do not agree."

"Therefore let them rhapsodise. They educate themselves. By pretending to admire, they at length attain genuine admiration, even as a vicious man, forced by the law to be virtuous, at length finds virtue as second nature to him."

AUTHOR.—"I don't believe it; and I don't think you believe it either. Your gushing admirer gushes through life and never attains sincerity."

J.—"Perhaps so; but I was endeavouring to place gush and rhapsody on a philosophic basis."

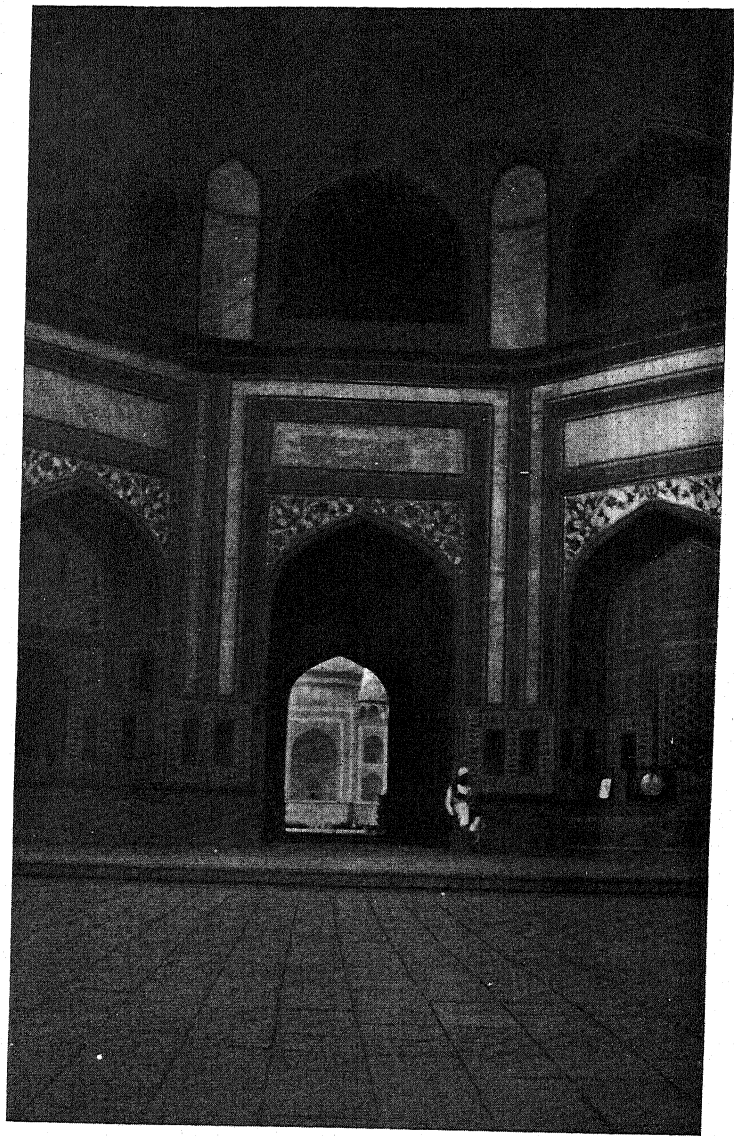
AUTHOR.—"I heard of a young lady the other day who, on seeing the Taj Mahal, declared that it was 'a wretched gingerbread-y thing.' Now, I disagree considerably with that young lady, but I admire her independence. Contrast it with the kind of stuff one hears about the Taj. 'It is the most beautiful building I ever saw in my life.' 'It is the most beautiful building in the world.' When will people learn that there is no 'most beautiful building in the world'—that all beautiful things are but as stars differing one from another in glory?"

J.—“You put it very nicely — very nicely indeed.”

On a broad English road, through an English cantonment, on a sunny afternoon that might have been the afternoon of an English July, we drove to the Taj Mahal. We descended from our gari, entered the vast entrance gate—which in itself is a building remarkable for its massive splendour—and found ourselves in the far-famed gardens of the Taj Mahal. There, at the end of the sparkling water, was the tomb erected by Shah Jehan, great man and builder of forts, as a tribute of love to his dead wife: with its white dome and cupolas; its high, pointed doors; its tapering minarets. The sunshine rested upon it, and cast black shadows on the ivory platform, and on the gardens where the cypresses were, and the quiet water.

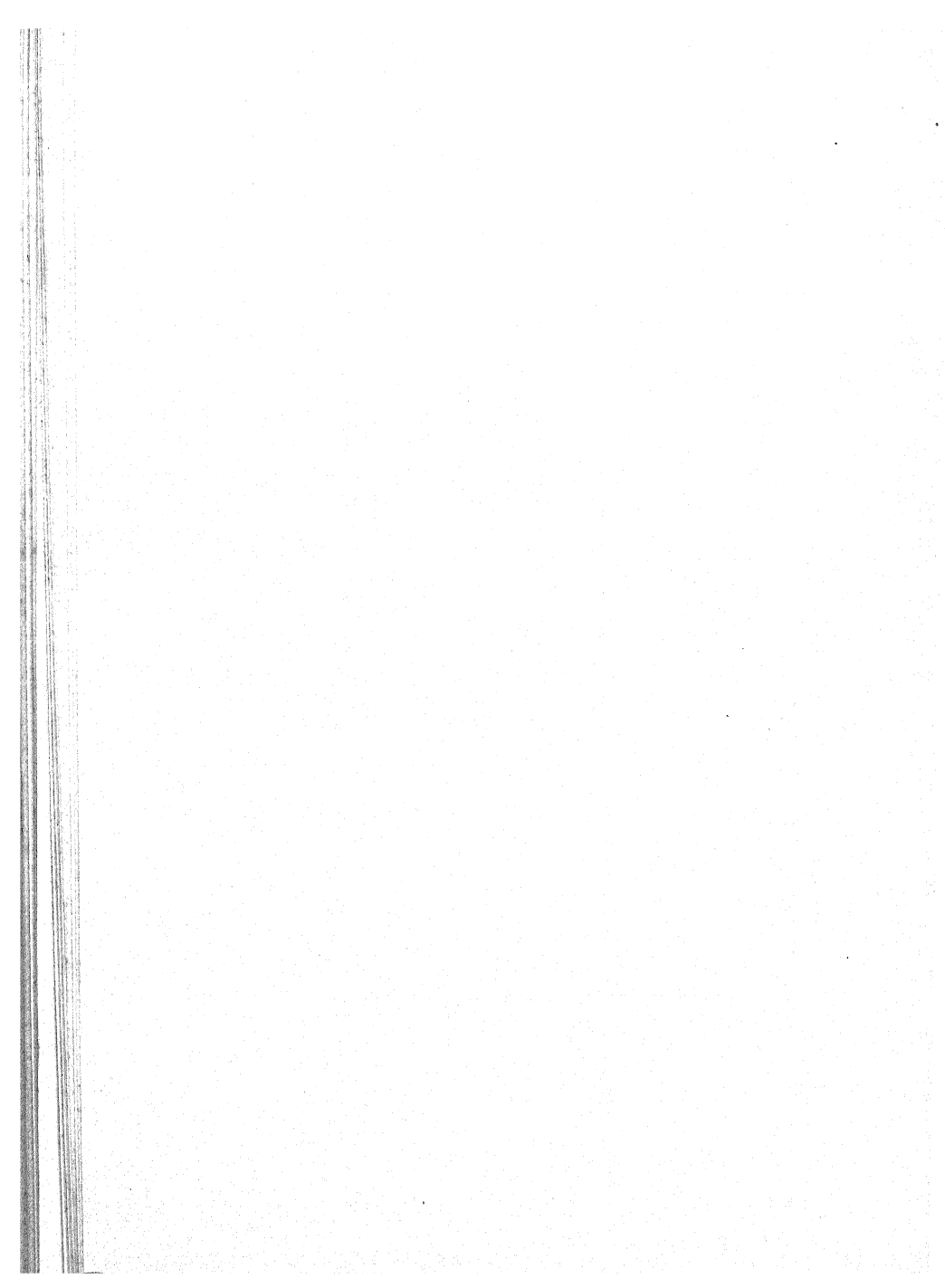
There is a seat within the entrance gate, at the bottom of the garden. From it I think you get the best view of the Taj. There is a foreground of garden, and a background of blue sky, against which the tomb is outlined, severe, perfect, pure.

Dismiss from your minds the buildings of the West. This building is not a cathedral,



To face page 286.

TAJ MAHAL: THE ENTRANCE GATE.



not a palace, assuredly not a "mausoleum." It is a tomb on the Eastern model. In the East they gave their best and loveliest to their dead, despising as high Heaven does—

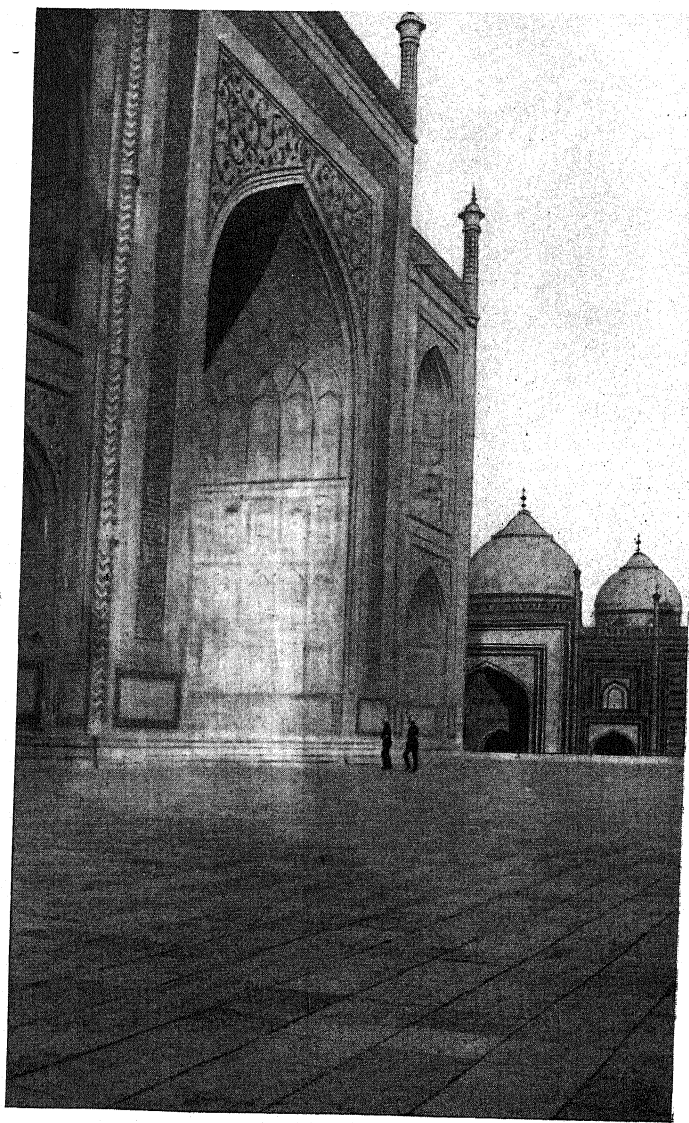
... the lore
of nicely-calculated less or more.

Shah Jehan's best is a building of white marble, possessing in a supreme degree that quality of lightness and vitality which I have noticed as characteristic of other great Mohammedan buildings. Massive and four-square as it is, it seems scarcely to touch the earth; a rough wind might blow it away. The dome rests over its pearly whiteness impalpable. Feathery fine the minarets guard its corners. . . .

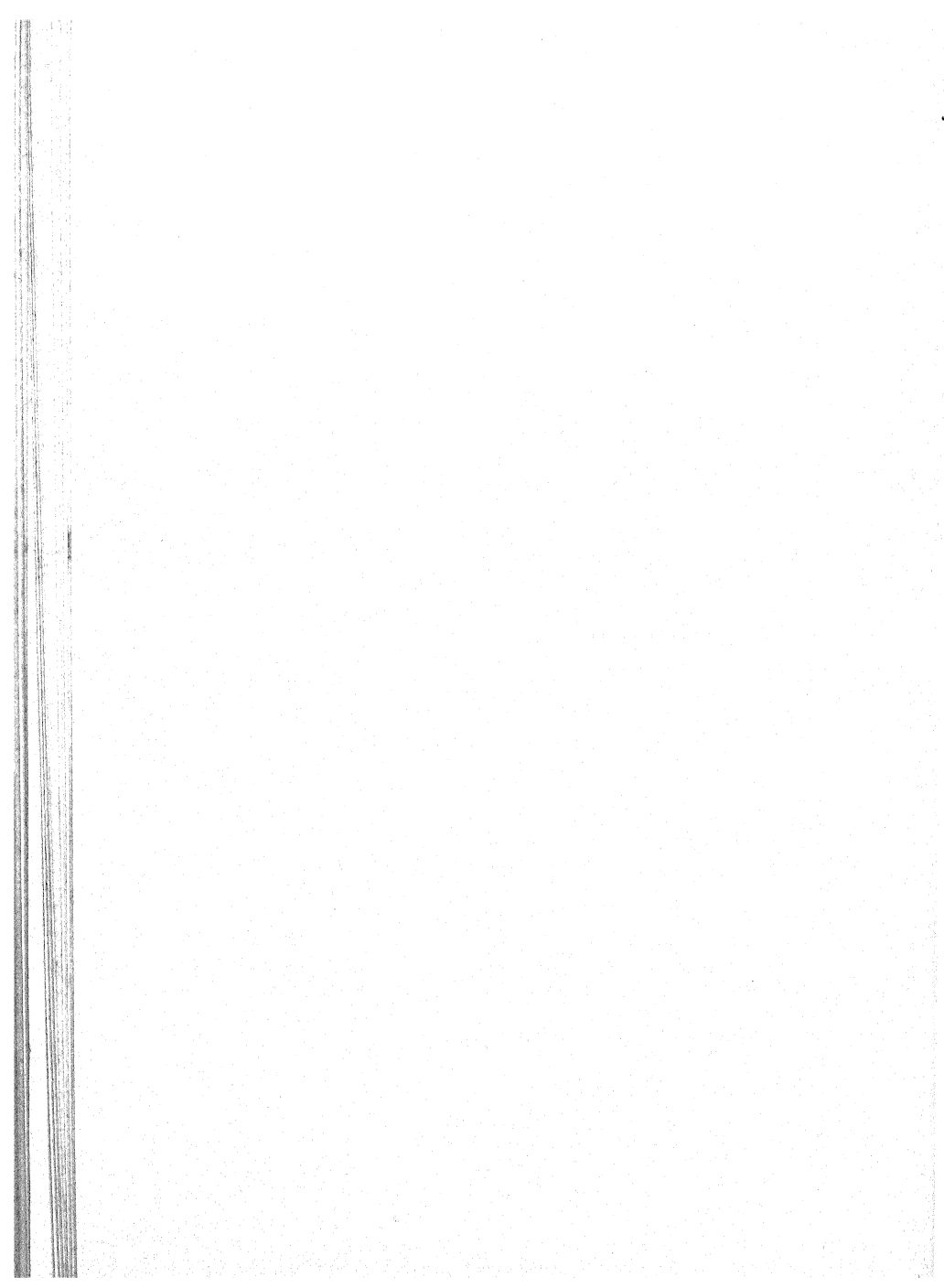
This has all, as I know, been said before. The Taj has been compared to a pearl, to a soap-bubble, to other things. It has also been said to resemble no other building in the world: to be unique. But it does resemble other buildings—Mohammedan mosques and tombs in various parts of the earth. The only difference is the difference between perfection (human perfection) and imperfection. The Taj does magnificently what other buildings attempt: other buildings splendidly fail; the Taj splendidly succeeds.

The Taj has been described before, and by many pens. I am not aware that any one who has not seen it has, or can have, an adequate idea of what it is like. In this it follows the general law. Describe a sunset, a picture, the face of a friend, never so eloquently, and he who had not seen your sunset, picture, friend, will indeed form an idea of the subject of your rhapsody, but an idea utterly different from the reality. Well, then, there is the art of photography. But a photograph of the Taj shows a stiff, dead thing, and the Taj is gloriously alive. The mistake is that we should attempt the description at all. Let us put away our pens and pencils; let us abandon the cherished phrases and similes, and simply say that we have seen the Taj Mahal. We have seen it—well: if we had not seen it, that would also be well. After all, many millions of men and women have lived and died quite happily, without ever having heard of or seen this noble building. It is not given to everybody to go to Corinth; but though Corinth is a fine city, there are villages where life is tolerable on the whole.

Let us not criticise, or sum up, or strike



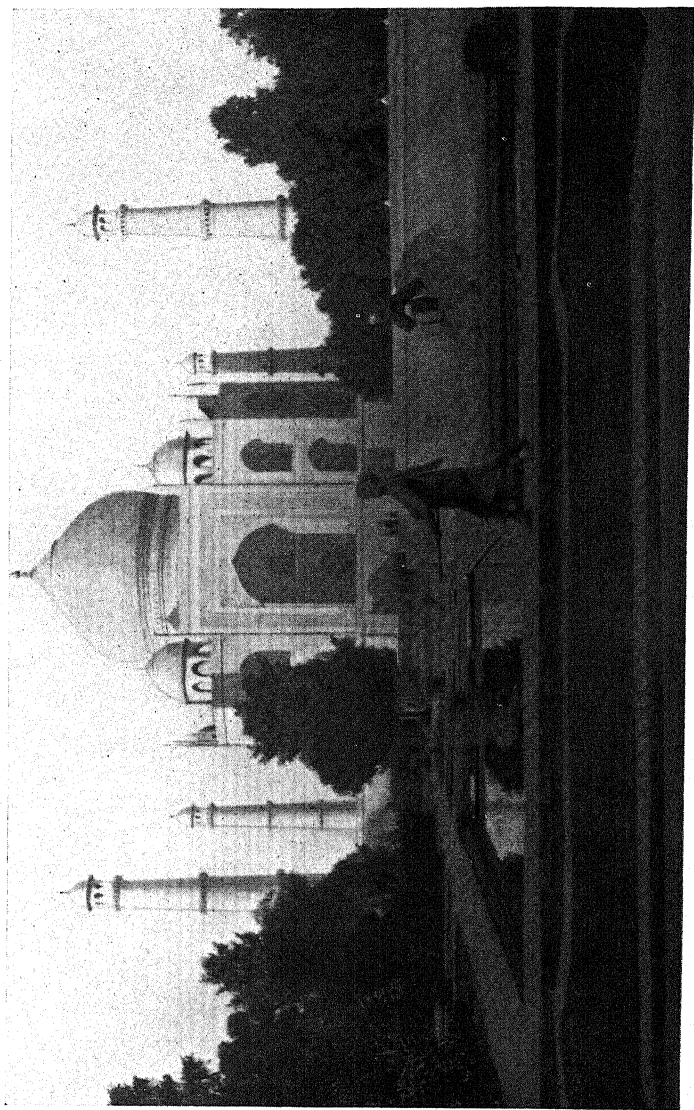
THE TAJ MAHAL GREAT DOOR.



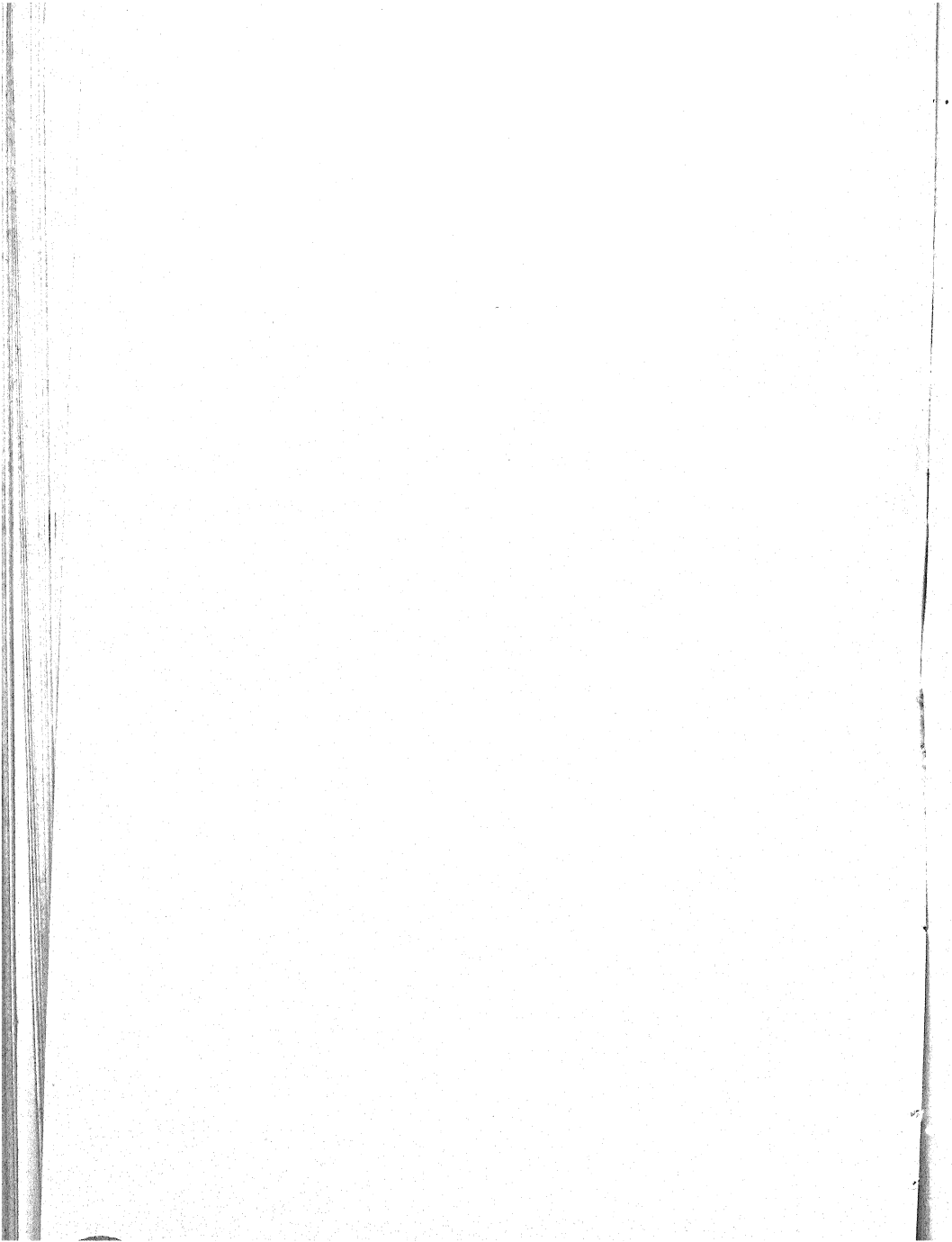
a balance. Here is a pearl, and there is Raphael's Madonna of the Chair. You do not condemn the pearl because it is not so significant, so charged with meaning, so heart-clutching as the Madonna. There is one glory of the sun, and another of the moon. "You soon exhaust the Taj," said a carping critic to me next night, as we journeyed to Bombay. "How different from English cathedrals!" How different, indeed. You are blaming the pearl for not being a Madonna. "But if there be a superior and an inferior order of beauty, surely the pearl is inferior!" Perhaps: I am holding no brief for the pearl. Pearls, indeed, leave me cold. I am only saying that pearls are perfect in their way, and must not be condemned because Raphael has painted pictures.

To be quite honest, my pleasure in beholding the Taj Mahal was not unmingled with something very like pain. You remember that I referred to Shah Jehan as a most successful Slave Driver. I have no warrant for saying that, except that Shah Jehan built a gigantic fort, a palace or two, a few mosques, and the Taj Mahal, all within the space of thirty years or so. What kind

of workmen were engaged on these buildings? There were no trades unions in those days; no minimum wage; no right of combination; nothing but the fierce organised few on the one hand, and on the other the meek unorganised many. They say that thousands of poor labourers worked at the Taj Mahal for nearly twenty years, being paid a miserable pittance. I know not whether there was slavery in the strict sense of the term, but certainly there went to the building of the Taj Mahal, not only mortar and marble, but human suffering and human blood. No doubt this is true of every great work of the kind, even in modern days. In modern days, however, we profess some pity and some care for life. We even pay compensation to widows, and take a paternal interest in orphans. In ancient days, and especially in the East, human life was accounted a small thing. The tyrant said, "Let the thing be done," and it was done, be the cost to humanity what it might. For this reason the Pyramids make me shudder. For this reason also the beauty of the Taj Mahal is flawed for me, because not without stain of blood. These lovely buildings were built by the few for the few.



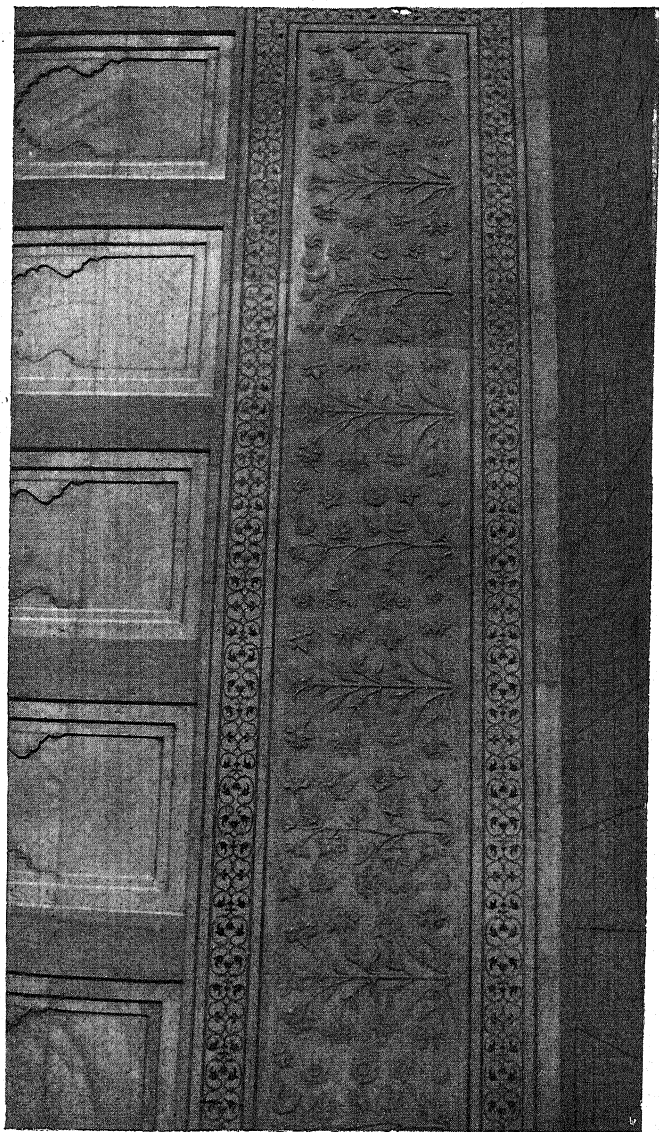
THE TAJ MAHAL.



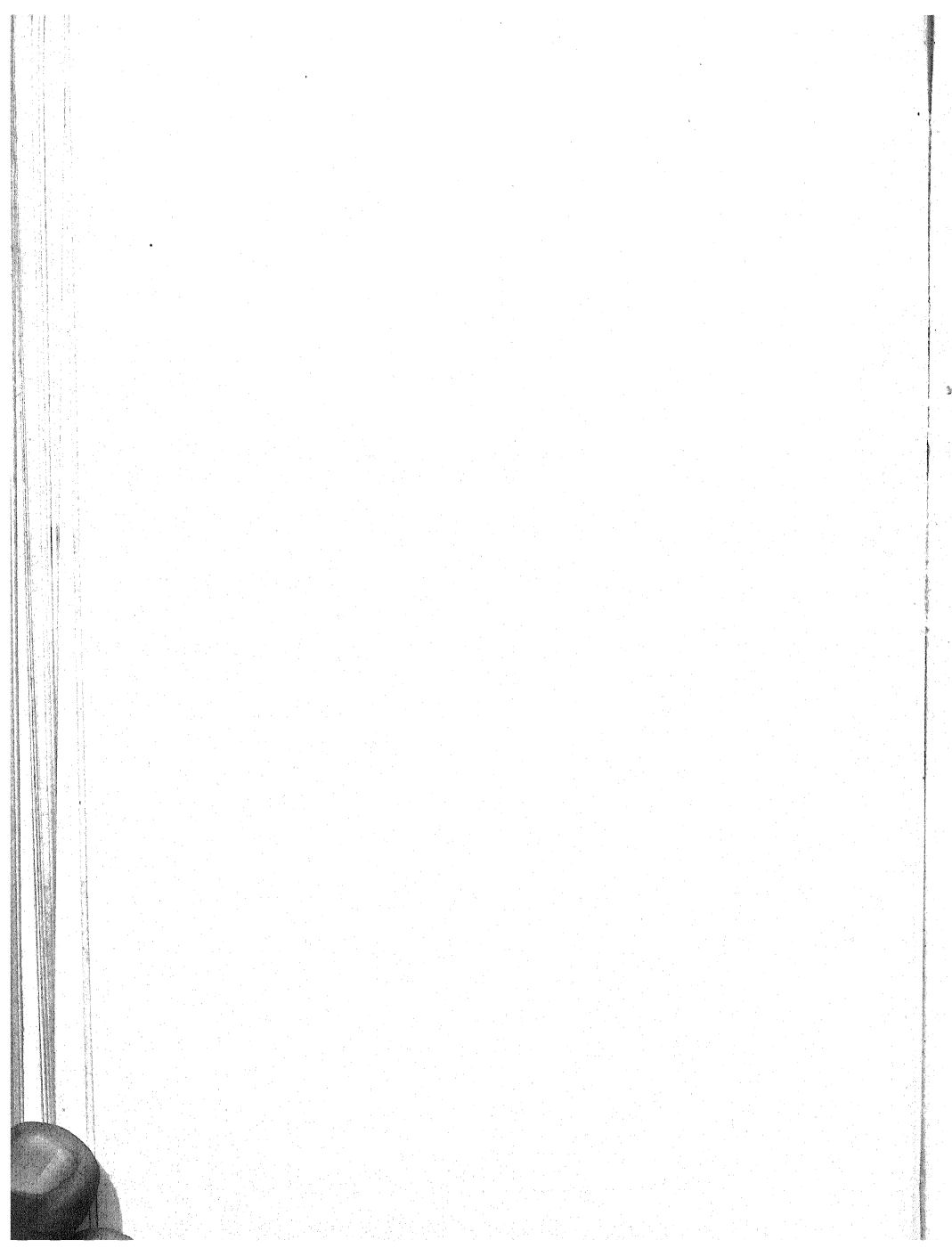
When we speak of the enjoyment of a masterpiece, can we always forget the slaves who helped to produce it? I confess I cannot. If I am slandering the shade of the Mogul, I ask for forgiveness. But the East seems to me—I acknowledge it is a matter of feeling—never to have attained that ideal of humanity which, however temporarily and imperfectly, we have attained in the West: the ideal that founded the United States, and freed the slaves in the West Indies. It is only a spasmodic ideal, for at present it is obscured in England (but it will come back). In the East, however, there is little feeling for humanity in our sense of the term: for one's family, perhaps; for one's caste; even for one's nation; but not for men in the mass. Life is a thing of small importance to the gentle Hindu, because he believes that an incarnation or two does not matter; to the fierce Mohammedan, Arab or Mogul, because he is fierce—that is, half-civilised; to the Japanese, because, with his veneer of civilisation, he still is a savage. Savages always and everywhere hold human life cheaply, and conversely those who hold human life cheaply are savages, whether they

sit in the House of Commons, or inhabit the Islands of the Sea . . . I am sure I beg the East's pardon. I have hinted, not obscurely, that it is a cruel hemisphere (did I say a sensual also?) but I am quite open to argument. I daresay we are much the same in the West—equally cruel and equally sensual—only we cover it up better. We wear more clothes, physically and morally. It is possible we are brothers under our skins. . . .

It does not take long to "visit" the Taj Mahal: to descend into the depths where the tombs are, and where you may discover that, beautiful and pure as the exterior of the building is, its hidden parts, too, are very fair. Then you may linger on the platform, by which the Jumna flows; or climb a minaret, as I saw two British soldiers doing. And you may come back, and sit in the gardens and watch the lizards play on the hot marble, or the silent turbaned figures of the gardeners flit about among the trees, sit in the shade and (if you like) dream of the beauty that is on the earth and in the sky, and of the vanity that is in all things human.



TAJ MAHAL: DECORATION.



CHAPTER XX

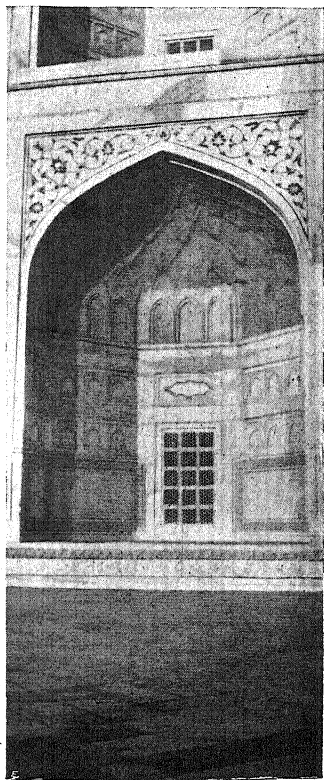
ON THE THINGS ONE DOES NOT SEE

HERE is a fact which I feel I must justify, at least to myself. I was within four hours of Cawnpore, six of Lucknow, a day's journey of Benares, and yet I saw none of these places. An explanation is not imperative, but it is comely.

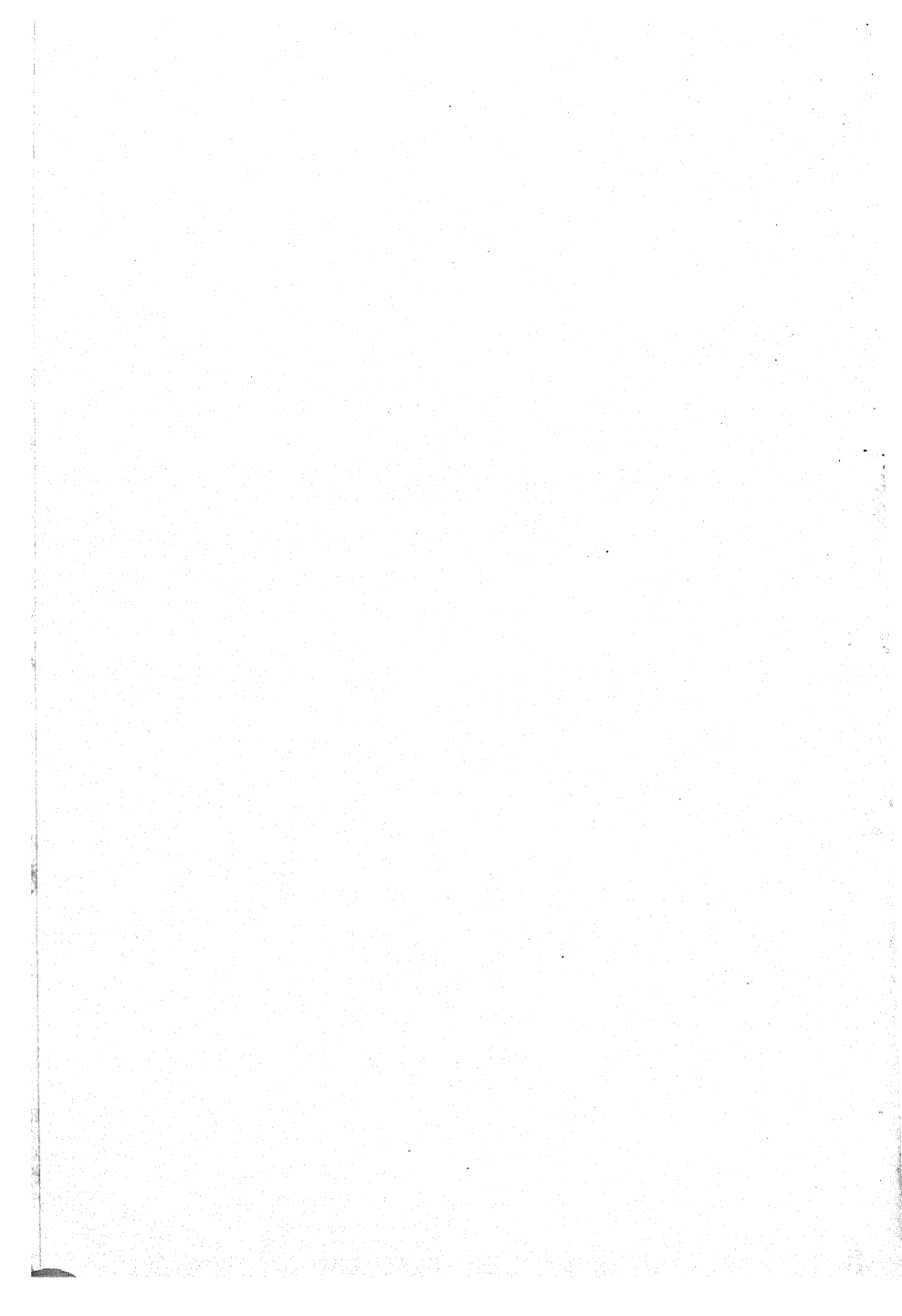
There are two kinds of men whom I have met: there is the man who likes to live alone, and the man who does not. The former is no doubt much the stronger and more admirable character. He has no preoccupations or prejudices of sentiment or of association. He is sufficient unto himself. A thousand may fall at his side, and ten thousand at his right hand, and he remains impavid. When he goeth a journey, he travelleth alone; and if he have an eye for beauty, alone he gratifieth it. He wanteth none to share his delights. Now consider the case of the other man. He likes his solitude in small doses. If, perchance, he retireth to the wilderness, he hasteneth back

again with joy, what time he has fulfilled his meditation. Beautiful scenes, stately pageants of nature or of art, noble experiences, are nought to him unless he can share them with one whom his soul loveth. From these things he, solitary, turneth with leaden eye. Take him up into an high place, and show him fair earthly kingdoms, and he shall but yearn the more for his own quiet, unromantic corner. He is notoriously a weak character. I have known such an one gaze in a hurried manner at a famous landscape, mutter "Oh, uncommon!" in response to the minatory, "It is considered very fine, sir," of the guide, and hasten away as if to catch a train. But I recognised him as one of the sharing kind. I think, indeed, most of us are of this kind. Even professed solitarians, like Thoreau, take good care to make extensive notes whilst in retirement, so as to inform the world with elaborate accuracy what they thought and felt during that period about nature and its grandeur. Most of us, I think, have had the experience of making believe to enjoy ourselves in the contemplation of scenery, when, in fact, we were profoundly miserable.

I will not say to which class I belong, but



TAJ MAHAL: A RECESS.



it happened that, on our return from the Taj Mahal, J—— found a telegram awaiting him, requiring his instant presence in Calcutta. Calcutta was far beyond my itinerary; so I bade farewell to J——, and we parted, with hopes of meeting again in Fleet Street. When J—— went, Agra became to me curiously uninteresting. The crowded bázars attracted me not; a cursory glance at the red mosque with the white zigzags sufficed me; nor could all the blandishments of the posse of guides drag me forth to visit the tomb of L'timadu-Daulah. Further off was the tomb of Akbar at Sikundra, and the royal city of Fatehpur-Sikri. Several temporary but kind acquaintances pointed out that it was my bounden duty to visit these. Further off still, but yet within easy distance, were Lucknow, Cawnpore, Allahabad, Benares. These places I really wanted to see: yet not alone. No false idea of what was due to historic scenes and famous cities should drag me, a nostalgic wretch, across the plains of Northern India. Earth was a desert, certainly, but I was not bound to traverse it. In fine, I ran away. This was Tuesday. A mail left Bombay for England on Saturday, and it was ordained that I should leave with it. No sooner said

than done. An express for Bombay left Agra station at 10.30 that morning (I had considered the question at the breakfast table). Hastily gathering my impedimenta together, I was just in time to catch the train. Acquaintances (temporary), guides, and other persons, tried vainly to reason with me. I heard murmurs of "Fatehpur-Sikri"—"Cawnpore, of course"—"Benares, I assure you, is *the* city of all others——" But I fled. The Bombay train received me; and when the P. & O. packet *Arcadia* steamed out of the harbour on Saturday, the figure of a certain passenger "might have been descried" leaning on the ship's rail and watching the shores of India fade into the darkness.

The places in India which I did not see were very numerous. I am conscious that the superior person who has visited all the cities of Northern India from Calcutta to Peshawur; has, perchance, wandered in the territories of the frontier tribes, where the English Sahib is still worshipped on the (shall we say?) *omne ignotum* principle, and where the thought of England strikes a curious terror through the midriff of the swarthy frontiersman; has gone south and east, to strange Tamil and Telugu-speaking regions. Such an one may

well feel hurt at the suggestion that a skimpy trip from London to Delhi is any justification for writing a book. But two things console me. First, there is always some still more superior person who has covered a still greater area of the Indian Empire than the other, and who may therefore be relied upon to keep him in his place. Second, I deny the superior person's right to dictate to me as to the writing of books, or as to what subjects should or should not be written about. I have been to Agra, and I have not been to Benares: am I therefore to refrain from the presentation of my impressions in literary form, lest, perchance, I should hurt the susceptibilities of some unknown but superior reader who has been to both places? I do not assent to such a proposition. And see how easily I could have deceived this person. I could with infinite ease have *pretended* that I went to Benares, Lucknow, etc., and have crammed descriptions of these places from the guide-books. Indeed, what guarantee has he, except my own assertion, that I so much as went to Agra or Delhi, or Bombay—that I went near the Indian Empire at all? Perhaps I have been in Fleet Street all the time. My friend X——, who wrote that

thrilling serial, *Three Months in the Bush*, was never out of England in his life, and did all the descriptive parts in the British Museum Reading Room.

But there are some advantages in having failed to exhaust the Indian Empire in one visit; for example, you can dogmatise freely about India and things Indian, which you could not in conscience do if you had, say, taken the trouble to stay in India for twenty years or so. Thus if one mentions in your hearing the partition of Bengal, you can at once say, off-hand: "Oh yes, of course . . . Such and such . . . this is where Curzon went wrong . . . Now this is what *I* should have done . . . ('You see Author has been to India, you fellows!') . . . Oh! I don't pretend . . . but, of course——"

Indeed, only this morning I received a letter from J——, dated from —— Square, W. in which he proceeds in the most dogmatic way to reflect at large upon India and Indian affairs. The Editor must not be held responsible for J——'s opinions; but as they will save him the labour of original thought, and as a moral of some kind is necessary in the last chapter, he will transcribe them here:

GENERAL REFLECTIONS

(AS EMBODIED IN A MINUTE BY J——)

“ . . . I am heretic enough to believe in ‘first impressions.’ ‘Don’t trust them,’ said the old diplomat to his pupil. ‘Why?’ queried the youth. ‘Because they are generally correct.’ The villainous old cynic was not far wrong. Reason and experience are good; but as a poetical person, I think that feeling is better—for *what is feeling but the sub-conscious action of inherited instincts which are the product of countless ages of reason and experience?* Thus when I feel that the East is very old, very weary, very sensual, in places very cruel, I am not going to apologise for a hasty conclusion. The horse who has never seen a tiger yet knows infallibly when he is within a tiger’s striking distance.

“Please do not take that ‘very old, very weary,’ etc., as summing up my impression of India, for I love India. Who that has been there has a soul so dead that he can say otherwise? Surely India is, first and last, a country that grips and holds you. And its charm is complex. A hundred elements go to the making of it: light and colour; crowded humanity; ancient creed and custom; rare and strange ideals; tremendous reserves and reticences. My frantic indignation is kept for the man who regards India as a place to make money in, and Indians as radically inferior

peoples. The latter proposition is false and cruel. We have much, no doubt, to teach India; we have also much to learn from her. Her ideals, I say, are strange and rare; for that very reason we of the West should seek to understand them. . . .

"Here is another thing. You know that you and I have often been dubbed, amongst our intimates, 'Little Englanders.' I never quite knew why. So far as I know, my little Englandism consisted in a crude but sincere desire that right and justice and humanity should come first, and everything else—territory, riches, prestige—afterwards. That is still my desire, and—need I say it?—my political creed is unchanged. But in India I felt what I may call the *poetical* side of the Empire idea. Here was a country, 7000 miles from England, where the name of England had a certain potent and magical effect with countless thousands of brown men from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. This would not have affected me if it had been the result of terrorism. But it wasn't: there was more than fear in it. There was (as I imagine) a certain homage to the great unknown Power that stood for order, for justice, and for Action (with a large A) in the minds of these men. That is a little different, isn't it, from our idea of England: a place to live in—a deuced foggy, uncomfortable place, where you make bread-

and-butter, pay taxes, and generally help things to go to the dogs. . . .

"All this, of course, means responsibility. (You will convict me of commonplaceness; but I don't care.) On the whole, as I have said before, the Indian Government is, in an almost miraculous way, successful. When you think of the enormous difficulties of the task: difficulties of climate, difficulties arising from the diversity of peoples, congenital difficulties of understanding between East and West—when you think of these things, you are astonished at the civilisation built up by the British in India, you marvel at the effectiveness of the instrument of government there. It has its faults—*ça va sans dire*; but any man who point blank denies its virtues rules himself out of the discussion at once. Even as a matter of tactics it is always well to acknowledge in full the merits of the enemy. But I well know the price of liberty; and I well know the dangers of bureaucracy. The class of Britons who feed the military side of bureaucracy in India are always worth watching, both at home and abroad, because they are in general men of muscle rather than of brain, and are quite incapable of taking the wide statesmanlike view. (I know there are exceptions, and admire the humanity and easy rule-of-thumb administration of many a soldier-civilian in India.) The class of Britons from which the Indian Civil Service is recruited is not, it is true,

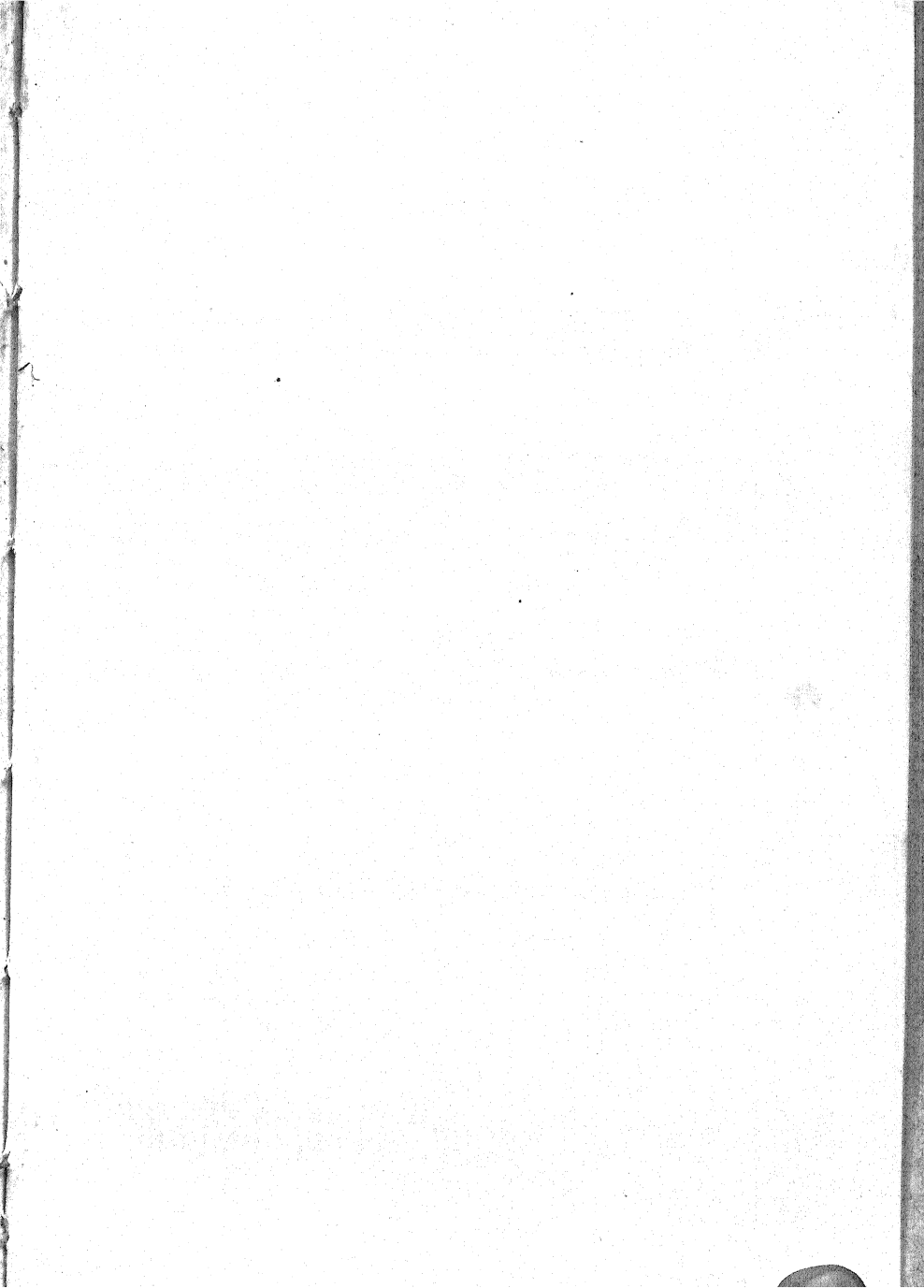
prima facie suspect. At least the men have a competent mental training before going to India. But bureaucracy by its very nature needs the severest vigilance. There is an invincible tendency to stiffen, to harden, to withdraw itself more and more from the people whom it is supposed to govern. And bureaucracy never becomes more pragmatic, more arrogant, more dangerous, than when changes threaten which it knows it cannot prevent. Bureaucracy in the last ditch is, like Mr Carlyle and many another philosopher, gey ill to live with. This brings me to my final point.

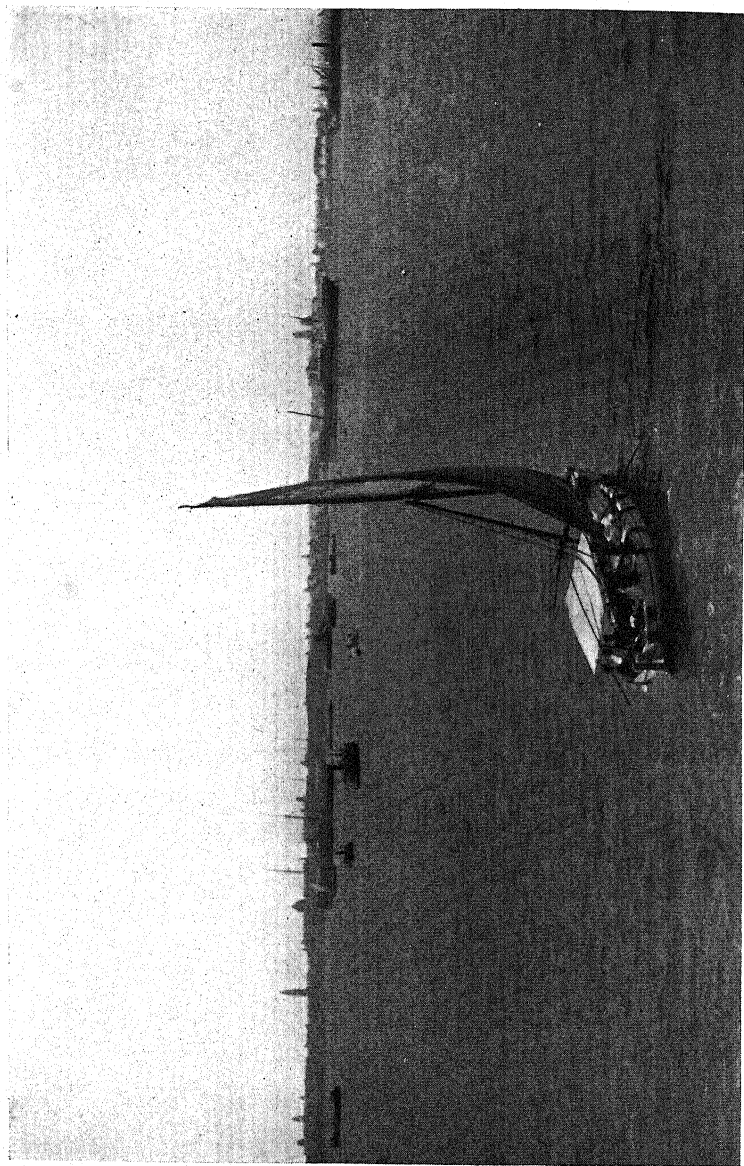
"India, my dear Auctor, is in some sense at the parting of the ways. That phrase no doubt excites your suspicion. I think I hear your cynical 'According to some people, India is always "at the parting of the ways"—a chronic condition of crisis, I suppose.' In a sense you're right: India is always at the parting of the ways; so are you: so am I. Every hour brings its necessity for decision. But observe. We have given India in some degree British education and British social and political ideas. We may have been wrong to do so; but it is too late to draw back. India—articulate India, I mean—has for good or ill accepted those ideas. Articulate India says: 'Yes; we agree. Taxation without representation is a bad thing; representative government is a good thing;

that the people who are governed should have a voice in the government is a most admirable principle. Now put your principle into practice.' This frightens the ingenuous Briton. 'Ah,' says he, 'I don't quite mean that. The theory only works in certain climates. You fellows aren't fitted for self-government. You must be patient until such times as you are.' And then there is an acute difference of opinion between governors and governed. It is not for me to say whether the natives of India are or are not 'fitted for self-government.' But some observations occur to me. First, there is no *a priori* reason why the Hindus, for example, should not be 'fitted for self-government.' They are as capable, intellectually, as we are; nay, far more so. But the work of administration needs more than intellect, it is urged; it needs character. No doubt, but character can be, is being, developed. Second, exactly the same objections which are urged against the claim of the Indians to self-government can be and are constantly urged against the extension of autonomous powers in England. 'The Indians are incapable. Look at local government in India: look at the corruption of native officialdom.' Might we not as well say 'The English are incapable. Look at provincial boards of guardians. Look at the notorious corruption in municipal life!' So, my dear Auctor, it is in my view a matter

of degree. Administrative ability can be developed as well in India as in England. And the moral of my homily is that we had better begin to develop it by availing ourselves of Indian talent in substantial work of government at the earliest possible moment. We can do it now with a good grace. The time might well come when we should be compelled to do it in chagrin and in bitterness. . . .

"I turn from these arid political aspects to an aspect more congenial. India is to me the great romantic land. What is romance but the poetical quality in life—the quality which suffuses all things with emotion, and pours strange new light on all accustomed facts? Don't ask me to analyse the romance of India. A hundred elements, as I have said, go to the making of it. But, further, I like to think of India as a land where, at the bar of Eastern ideals of quietism and asceticism, Western life may well bring itself to the test. Under yon blue sky and burning sun we men of greyer climes may well examine ourselves, and see if all be right with us; if our life of hurry and struggle is perchance the happiest life; if our material ideals of success and prosperity are perchance the highest ideals. If we in our turn can give India some boons—a rule for the conduct of practical affairs, a hint of ethical and spiritual significance which, it may be, has been lost to the East in the





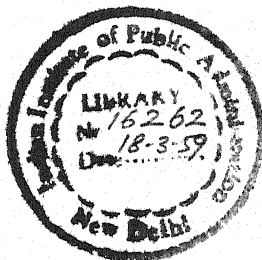
BOMBAY: A LAST GLIMPSE.

aberglaube of the ages, that also is well. Long, indeed, may India be bound to England by ties not only of policy, but of friendship and of love; for are we not in a very special sense 'members one of another'?"

Here are again the wide streets of Bombay, with the glare of the sun on them. The Ballard Pier is a babel of sound. Many a gari rolls up, laden with baggage, depositing tired missionaries and their families, or sunburnt civilians, homeward bound. Here is the doctor, who feels your pulse, enquires confidently if you have had any fever of late, and stuffs a mystic paper into your hand, all in a surprisingly short space of time. And here the launch, ready to take you out to the s.s. *Arcadia*, lying out in the harbour with steam up. You have a delightful "going home" feeling. Two or three white officials in topees, lingering by the steps, look at you enviously, as if they knew that feeling, and wished that they had it. The launch skims lightly over the water to the steamer. Now the mails are on board; the last boat has left for the shore; the engines begin to throb; the low sea-washed line of the city imperceptibly recedes. On

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speeds the ship through the quiet, sunlit water. It is good-bye to India. And so, to that magical land your heart says: *Ave atque vale*—hail and farewell!



THE END